

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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THE RIVAL BOAT CLUBS; OR, THE BOSS SCHOOL AT BEECHWOOD

By ALLYN DRAPER.
AND OTHER STORIES



Now," cried Hal, "the victory is ours. But the beat isn't bad enough yet. Now, spurt!" They responded in a twinkling and the red pennant went further to the front.

Mon. Aug. 29, 1921.

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CHAPTER I.

THE RACE.

It was a breathless moment.

The crowd on the river bank craned their necks, and strained their ears to catch the sound which was to send away the rival boat crews on their long, and what was sure to be, hotly contested race.

Out in the stream, separated a few yards, lay two shell boats, each manned by a crew of six sturdy young fellows, stripped to shirt and drawers, oars feathered and ready to take the water at a second's notice.

Looks of animosity were flashed across the space between the boats, and the captain of each anxiously scanned his rival's crew to see if he could find a weak spot in it, and then mentally compared it with his own.

So far as appearance went they were excellently matched, and their respective captains felt that it was destined to be a tough pull.

At the extreme corners of a stand by the water's edge, erected for the judges, stood two persons whose black clothing, long faces and eye-glasses betokened their calling; one was Professor Obadiah Strong, principal of Beechwood Academy, the other Professor Ezekiel Grierson, principal of the Beechwood Institute.

Obadiah Strong opened his mouth, and instantly the crew whose boat flew a bit of red bunting was all attention.

"Boys of the Academy, the eyes of Beechwood are upon thee. May the record of victory descend to thee."

"Boys of the Institute," shouted Ezekiel Grierson, "the honor of our school is at stake. As we have always stood one step in advance in everything, let us also stand higher than all in this display of muscle and vigor."

Obadiah Strong smiled sarcastically, and then his grim, long visage put on an imperturbable look.

"Make ready!" called the judge. "When I fire—start."

The judge pointed a revolver upward and the two boat crews gathered their muscles for the struggle.

"Take it easy, boys—keep cool—and we'll lick the boots off 'em!" said Hal Herrick, captain of the academy crew. "They carry blue at the bow of their boat, but in a few minutes they'll carry it in their faces or I'm no judge."

It was good advice then, is good advice always—keep cool. Crack!

"Now!" cried Hal, and simultaneously every oar struck the water, and bending beneath the powerful stroke, sent the light boat flying.

So clean and in perfect unison was the first stroke that it put them a couple of feet in advance at once, seeing which divers irrepressible youths on the bank, wearing the red ribbon, uttered a wild hurrah for the academy crew; this was supplemented by an answering yell from the institute boys, as, recovering the lost ground, the blue flag went to the front.

Away they darted, cutting the water like keen knives, and tossing tiny jets of spray from their bows.

Oh! how they tugged at those ashen blades which bent beneath their sturdy strokes; and how their blood grew warm, then hot, then fairly seething under the intense excitement, which, however, each man repressed, knowing full well that to allow it to rise very much, was equivalent to losing the race.

Thirty-four strokes to the minute, and the red flag leading Hurrah—hurrah!

Thirty-seven to the minute, the blues are spurting—ha! they're gaining—they're gaining—see them crawling along, inch by inch—catch your breath—don't breathe—another strong pull—hurrah—hurrah! nobly done!

Hal Herrick's face expressed the deepest resolution as he lowly said:

"My hearties, ye've got a tougher job than I expected. Mind stroke—now!"

Thirty-five, thirty-six to the minute, the reds rose to, blues straining one higher and forging ahead slowly.

A thrill ran through the academy crew at sight of the institute going slowly ahead, and in the excitement one man pulled badly out of time.

"Time!" cried Hal, in a firm, stern tone. "Keep cool—on your life—keep cool and we have them. They're tugging themselves to death. Mind stroke! and all together!"

His words were well timed, and at thirty-five to the minute the reds slid along as fast as the blues at thirty-seven, their work being more effective; and then at the same rate the reds began to close up the gap; nearer and nearer, slowly but surely they hauled alongside, and then span by span carried red to the front.

A full length in advance, the stake boat was reached.

"Feather!" cried Hal Herrick, and then like red-hot shot his orders fell among them.

The stake boat was turned and then commenced the long pull back to the judges' stand.

Now had come the tug of war!

The home stretch was started on with the blues one length behind, and being urged to greater exertions by Bob Grierson, son of the institute's principal.

Nobly and well did the blues respond; thirty-five, thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight to the minute, and with unbroken form.

It was a terrible pace, and almost seemed to lift the light craft from the water.

On they went in the wake of the reds, then blue lapped red, and then surely but slowly crawled up until the flags were in a line.

Thus they remained until but a quarter mile remained to cross the line before the judge's stand.

Wild with excitement the rowers could scarce command their muscles, and but for the firm wills of their captains must have broken completely.

"Stroke!" cried Hal, in a low, intense voice. "Keep cool and remember we belong to the Academy."

A faint cheer was the audible response, but the unspoken reply was returned through the bending blades as they flashed in and out of the water.

As if with one accord, all those on the bank of the river gazed with bated breath, and no sound was heard but the dip of the oars.

"Pull!" cried Hal.

"Pull!" shouted Bob Grierson.

And pull they did, the perspiration starting from every pore, and dripping from the faces like falling rain.

The hearts of the spectators stood still as the boats flitted along, neither six inches in front nor astern.

Then—"hurrah—hurrah—hurrah! Go in, reds—well done—you lead by a quarter—make it a half—pull—pull!"

"Faster—faster—faster, blues—one more pull like that—ha! another, and you're up again. Ye gods—even! Passed them, by thunder!"

"Hip—hip—reds are gaining again—blues fell behind—the game's up for them. Well done, reds, you're a length ahead. Pull like suckers, but don't let 'em close on you again!"

It was pandemonium with all restraint gone, and the throng shouted itself hoarse.

"Now," cried Hal, "we've got 'em, the victory is ours. But the beat isn't bad enough now—spurt!"

They responded in a twinkling, and the red pennant went further to the front, so far that, seeing their struggles useless, the blue broke all up; the race was ended a few seconds later as the academy boys crossed the line ten lengths ahead.

"Hurrah for the academy, the boss school of Beechwood!" yelled an enthusiastic admirer, and being caught up, the cry was uttered by a thousand throats.

It was a great triumph, and settled the claims to championship, so long a matter of bitter feeling between the rival boat clubs connected with the academy and institute.

Then came a silence to hear what the judge would say.

"I declare the Academy club to be the winner, and well may they be proud of the victory they have gained. Mr. Strong, you have a noble lot of boys under your charge—a lot that I will venture to say cannot be equalled in our country."

Once more a wild cheer went up, and as it was fading away, an angry voice was heard exclaiming:

"It is false; there is a finer lot of boys right here in this town, and they are to be found in Beechwood Institute of which I, Ezekiel Grierson, am the principal. It is a storehouse of wisdom, a granary of knowledge, and not a third-rate circus, presided over by a mountebank."

The color arose to the face of Obadiah Strong at this direct insult, and gasping his cotton umbrella more firmly he sidled forward.

"Fried Grierson, dost thou intend to traduce me?"

"No, friend Strong, I do not; I intend to, and do, speak the truth."

"Thee had better retract thy words. I am a peaceable man, as becomes one of my persuasion, but there hath been times when the spirit hath been ungovernable. I feel it even now working within me, and it may cause me to do rash things."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Grierson, in hysterical defiance.

"Thee does not retract?"

"No, but add this to it—"

"Beware, the spirit is mounting!" cried Obadiah. "It hath reached my shoulders. I feel it twitching in the muscles of my arms. What sayest thou?"

"That you are an old fool, and know about as much of educating boys properly as a cat!" cried Grierson, so blinded with rage and professional jealousy as to be completely heedless of results.

For a moment a look of pious horror o'erspread the face of the Quaker, and then the spirit began to cut up queer antics with the muscles of his arms.

Thwack—thwack!

With handle broken, covering torn, the spirit impelled the broken umbrella to fly into the river, and then still guiding the movements of the unwilling Quaker, the spirit clenched his fingers into a hard bunch and brought them in contact with Grierson's eye.

"A fight—a fight!" was loudly yelled. "Go in, Academy—go in, Institute!"

Punch—"I cannot"—punch—"control"—punch—"the spirit"—punch—"it hath"—punch—"gotten the best"—punch—"of me!"

"Hurrah for the academy, it is the boss school!" shouted an impulsive youth. "Pummel him, Obadiah, the whole academy is at your back! Black his other eye, Quaker!"

"Shameful!" gasped several of the elder and most respect-

able inhabitants of Beechwood. "Gentlemen—gentlemen—control yourselves—"

The sentence was cut short by a wild howl from Grierson, the spirit having moved the Quaker's knee upward into the region of his bread-basket.

Recovering himself, Grierson made a bold move and seized between his teeth two of the fingers Obadiah had twined in his bushy hair.

The Quaker groaned with anguish, but showed his grit by refraining from any outcry; on the contrary, he only gritted his teeth and slowly said:

"Friend Grierson, I bid thee loose thy hold, or thee may have occasion to be sorry for disregarding my advice."

But Grierson hung on with bull-dog tenacity, and only bit the deeper, drawing forth a dismal moan from Obadiah, in whose good right arm the spirit was becoming turbulent to a degree that might be termed violent.

Backward it flew, and—bang! the knotted fist went straight to Grierson's sound eye.

The spirit got into the Quaker's leg, and once again his knee went rambling against Grierson's stomach.

"Ow—ow—ow!" yelled the victim of this double assault, and when he opened his mouth to emit these cries of pain, Obadiah withdrew his mangled fingers, blew on them as if on something hot, clapped them in his mouth, but yanked them out, as the moisture sticking them set them to smarting most furiously, then laid them under his arm, then clapped them as if they were freezing; meanwhile the spirit had been rising stronger, and suddenly fastening on Grierson, with a most diabolical yell, he tossed him headlong into the river.

"Bully for Obadiah!" yelled a wicked small boy. "The academy's the boss school, and don't you make any mistake about it!"

"You rascally hound!" gasped Grierson, jumping from the boat to the platform and making a savage rush at Obadiah. "I'll ram your teeth down your throat, you old bald-headed galoot;" and whang went his fist against the Quaker's mouth, carrying before it a set of false teeth and nearly suffocating Obadiah ere he could spit them into his hand.

"Hold on there!" shouted Hal Herrick, springing to the rescue of his principal. "Don't strike him again, but just try a whack at me. Come on—come on, if there's a row I want a hand in."

Spat—spat—spat!

"Hurrah—hurrah! Take sides!" yelled somebody, and in the twinkling of an eye a hundred youths were engaged in battering each other's heads and making black eyes.

Short, sharp and fierce was the battle, and a wild hurrah went up; the instituters had then fled, the academicians had vindicated their title as the "boss school at Beechwood."

CHAPTER II.

OBADIAH RIDES A MULE.

As bitter as had been the rivalry between the two schools, it was now increased tenfold; prior to this the principals of the schools, though hating each other intensely, had, never countenanced more than secretly the numerous escapades of the boys when they met; but after this they more or less openly sanctioned it.

The school was in the midst of its session, and Obadiah was smiling benignantly upon them from the platform, when a boy who had been out, returned with the information that the boys from the institution were playing baseball on the green.

Obadiah's face clouded, his face elongated.

Hal Herrick stood forward.

"Sir, on behalf of the boys, I request that shool be dismissed for the day."

"Hem—ha!" grunted Obadiah. "Thou surely must know it's against our rules."

"So I do, sir, but—Grierson's boys are playing ball on the green."

"Well?" said Obadiah, with an interested look.

"We should like to play ball, too, and they have usurped our right to the ground."

"I should grant the request, only—I am afraid that thee will not agree very well. Thinkest thou can agree?"

"We'll try, sir," said Hal, smiling in his sleeve. "But if they should set on us we can keep up our end."

"And thinkest thou their members are not too great for thee to cope with successfully?"

"I know it."

"Return to thy seat," said Obadiah, a strange smile coming over his face; a minute later he arose. "Boys, thy books may be put aside and thee may have a holiday. But on no account have aught to do with the rascallions of Grierson. But should they assail thee—remember the merciful precepts thou hast heard fall from my lips—and spare them if thou canst; still, should they aggravate too greatly and the spirit move thee—thrash them like the—hum—ha!—blazes; yes, that's the word—blazes!"

With a shout of joy the boys hurried away, snatching up bats and balls as they went.

A conflict was inevitable, the moment the academy crowd reached the green.

Hot words as to priority of right followed between Hal and young Grierson, the lie was given, a blow struck; this was the signal, and the boys fell to pummeling each other with a zest which hate only can give.

One by one the instituters were placed hors de combat, the fight rapidly narrowing its limits, until the contest was literally in the hands of the champions of either side, Grierson and Herrick.

"Here's at you!" cried Hal, gaily, and making a feint with his left, to guard against which Bob laid himself open to a clip from Hal's right, which was given with royal good will.

"Curse you!" howled Bob, and wildly raging he forced the fight so fiercely that Hal was compelled to slowly retire, yet kept all his advantage, being cool; and beyond a slight love-tap or two escaped scot free, though Bob's excitement and wildness brought down upon him the most dire consequences, his two eyes being painted fit for Vanity Fair.

With sense enough left to see that he was getting the worst of it, Bob made a desperate effort, bounded forward, clenched at a fortunate minute, and getting Hal's head in chancery, got in some pretty work for a few seconds.

"Rough and tumble, is it?" cried Hal. "You'll get enough of it, then, before we get through!" the words hissing through his teeth like escaping steam.

One grand effort and he freed himself.

The next minute he had an advantageous hold and—whack—whack! each blow bringing out a howl.

Under the terrible punishment Bob Grierson went to earth, limp as a dish-rag, with Hal on top of him.

"Are you ready to cry enough?" demanded Hal, sternly.

"Never!" shrieked Bob. "Let me up, curse you, let me up!"

"Not till you cry enough," was the reply, as Hal twisted his hands in the neck-band of Bob's shirt, thus nearly strangling him. "Enough yet?"

"No—no—no!"

"How now?"

Bob groaned but was silent.

"How is it now?"

"Enough!" gasped the conquered Grierson, on hearing which Hal let him rise, saying:

"You bear witness, boys, that he called for quarters."

"Hal Herrick," hissed Bob, in menacing tones, "look out for me; from this minute I am your sworn enemy, and I'll have your heart's blood for this if I hang for it!"

"Bah!" was the retort. "Go home and ask your mother does she know you're out."

This only served to add new fuel to the flame, and cursing fiercely Bob Grierson slunk away in the wake of his vanquished men, leaving the academy boys masters of the field.

But they had little desire for ball now, for not one but had some bruise that would be better for immediate attention.

"Boys, what has happened thee?" inquired Obadiah Strong, as the procession filed into the house. "Hast thee been among the Philistines?"

"Yea, verily," replied one, raising a laugh by adopting words much made use of by the professor.

"These disgraceful fights must be stopped," said the principal sternly.

"He thinks we were licked," suggested one.

"It was grand!" cried Hal. "Why, sir, they disputed with us, and we put them to flight like a parcel of frightened sheep."

"Verily it grieveth me to hear of such doings, and—boys, I will order a plum pudding for to-morrow."

At this there was a grand shout of joy, for in a boarding-school this was a treat; if straws ever show which way the wind blows, then must Professor Friend Obadiah

Strong have taken hearty satisfaction in having his boys thrash those of "that ungodly man, Grierson."

Bob Grierson led his crowd homeward, fuming and fretting, and prophesying death and destruction to the academy and all its inmates, Hal Herrick in particular.

The fruits of the battle on the green were soon in full bloom; the instituters entered the grounds of the academy at night and dug pitfalls, destroyed trees and shrubs, and committed havoc generally.

They knew better than to attempt striking twice in the same place, and had they done so they would have gone home only after having experienced a severer dressing down than ever before.

Then the instituters struck a blow whose boldness startled everybody; as Friend Obadiah was returning home one night about ten o'clock, and just as he was midway in a rather dismal vacant space, a sepulchral voice called:

"O-ba-di-ah!" and Bob Grierson, with a sheet around him and face given a ghastly appearance with phosphorus, stepped out in front of the Quaker, who, however, didn't frighten for a cent, but reached out for the would-be ghost.

Seeing his racket spoiled, Bob gave a low whistle, and half a dozen boys darted from the bushes and surrounded the Quaker; he looked at them in astonishment for a minute, and then slowly said:

"Verily thou art fools!"

"Are we?" hissed Bob, throwing aside the sheet. "Sail in, boys, and don't let him holler out."

"Ye ungodly Philistines!" exclaimed Obadiah. "Do you attack me, a friend, and a peaceable man? Are ye highwaymen, that masks cover your faces? Begone, you scum."

Obadiah had need of a moving spirit just then; it finally came, but not before the battle was as good as lost; and a few minutes later the masked boys bodily carried the Quaker within a line of bushes which would conceal them from the road.

Now their scheme became apparent.

Keeping Obadiah quiet by means of a billet of wood thrust into his mouth, they stripped him of all his clothing; this was not so much of a hardship, however, on that hot summer's night.

A lantern was lighted and carefully shaded so that Obadiah might not catch even a glimpse of their faces, and then three pots of paint were fished from a hiding-place.

"We're going to give you a new and patriotic suit in the place of the one we took from you," said Bob Grierson, as he daubed a red stripe across the Quaker's forehead.

Another fellow stood near with white paint, and he put on a stripe of white, and this was followed by a stripe of blue, in which succession they painted him to his very heels.

Just as the finishing touches were being given a new idea entered their heads on hearing the bray of a mule that was pastured in this open space; no sooner thought of than done, and the animal was led captive to the spot, and soon was ornamented with red, white and blue.

Shouting with merriment, the instituters mounted Obadiah, and, after fastening his legs so that he could not get off the mule if he wished, they gave the animal a sharp cut with the whip, and started for home, leaving the victim of their escapade to pass the night as best he might.

It was positively criminal to endanger a man's life so, and some few of the boys seemed to feel this and wished to return and free him, but Bob said no, flatly, and none dared cross him.

"He licked my father, and this is getting equal with him."

The mule got into the streets of the town, into the dark, deserted streets, with only a light here and there stealing through a crack in some window.

Ah! if he could only call for help, but he could not, though the backbone of the mule split him to the ears.

The long hours dragged by, and then Obadiah saw a red tinge in the East, giving the promise of day, and his heart was gladdened with thoughts of people soon being astir and releasing him.

He heard a window go up, and, glancing toward it, saw a woman gazing at him in astonishment, which caused him to blush to the roots of his hair. She turned away with an exclamation of surprise, and seemed to speak to some one within. Then a man appeared at the window, glanced at him and burst into a laugh as he turned away.

But he hastened into the street to release Obadiah from his unpleasant position, and no sooner was the Quaker's feet on the ground than he started, fleet as a hare, for the

academy, arriving there just as the boys were tumbling into the grounds for a run before breakfast.

Loud were their cries of indignation, and could Obadiah only have sworn to his persecutors positively the village squire would have given them a snug room in the county jail; though satisfied that Grierson's boys were at the bottom of it, they could not swear to the fact.

After this the war of the schools became more bitter than ever, and the boys lost no chance to annoy each other.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Hal Herrick. "Boys, just gather around and listen," and then he unfolded a plan which made them jump for joy.

A sloop lay at the pier the next morning, and bright and early, young, fresh-looking girls tripped on board, carrying dainty little baskets. Grierson's boys had chartered the sloop and were going on a picnic.

At nine o'clock all the girls, and the good things edible as well as kissable, were on board, and all the boys were gathered; then a delegation of more than half their number was sent up the hill to escort to the sloop his royal highness, Professor Grierson, who had consented to become one of their party.

Strolling carelessly along, the academy boys saw this, and in pursuance of Hal's plan, they made a rush, and with a wild, harum-scarum yell reached the sloop's deck.

"Cast off!" cried Hal.

The instituters tried to resist, but Hal ran several off by the scruff of the neck, cast loose the lines himself, ordered a companion to the wheel, and taking the breeze, the sloop stood off into the stream, while the girls, the first alarm over, laughed, and treated the whole as a good joke.

"I demand your return!" shouted an instituter.

"You do?" laughed Hal. "Well, you shall go back, for we don't want you along."

So saying, he picked the fellow up and flung him overboard, and dripping wet and muddy, he waded ashore; thus Hal disposed of all the other instituters, and then following the original programme they went to the woods, enjoyed the good things made for their enemies, danced with their girls, and had a good time in general.

CHAPTER III.

HAL HERRICK MEETS ENEMIES.

At about the time that the sloop might be expected back, the instituters gathered on the pier, determined to wrest their girls from the care of the academy boys; they had endeavored to obtain another craft for the purpose of going to the grove, but Beechwood did not support a great amount of shipping, and consequently this could not be done; their rancor was so great that they had also endeavored to get out a warrant for the arrest of the academy boys, but the squire's own son being among their number this was refused.

The sloop was docked, and the academy boys, each with a girl on his arm, passed from the pier. Instantly ensued a scene, the instituters trying to wrest away the girls, but met a reception they were unprepared for.

Before leaving the woods, Hal had ordered his followers to cut a good, thick switch, and conceal it in his sleeve in going ashore.

At the word of command these green twigs were now snatched out—and—swish—swish was heard on all sides as they cut the air ere alighting on the shoulders of the instituters, who turned tail and fled, after heroically resisting the warmth of the switching for several moments.

Wild with passion, Bob Grierson caught up a stone, and but for the girls would have instituted a war of stoning; fearing to throw it on their account, he sullenly dropped it to the ground and followed with his crowd, in hopes that the academy boys would separate, when they intended falling mercilessly on the detached portion.

But Hal was too wise to permit anything of this sort to occur, and they made the rounds, dropping each girl at her house, but were keeping in a solid body.

Chagrined and smarting, the instituters were compelled to return to their homes without getting any revenge for being cheated out of their picnic, and to make matters worse, they heard many of the girls proclaim the fact that they had never had such a jolly time in all their lives.

Hal had struck up an acquaintance with a young and

handsome girl rejoicing in the name of Minnie Mason, and the sight of her leaning lovingly on Hal's arm was the unkindest cut of all to Bob, who had long been "gone" on her.

The affair raised a breeze of excitement in Beechwood that blew steadily for days afterward, and everywhere one went he heard being talked about the original and wild escapade of the academy boys under the leadership of Hal Herrick.

Bob Grierson was rendered no better humored by hearing this so repeatedly alluded to, and he swore firmly to get square with Hal, even if he killed him to do it.

Yes, thoughts of murder were now Bob's constant companions, when he heard rumors of Hal's having been seen to call on Minnie, and when he became cognizant of the fact with his own eyes, his fury was boundless.

Beechwood Academy lay nearly half a mile outside of the village, on a knoll of ground, surrounded by a few acres under a high state of cultivation; between the two places, for a stretch of a quarter of a mile, was a low piece of ground, covered with bushes and trees, across which a plank walk had been laid.

About midway of the walk a tree overhung it, and into this, one dark night, Bob Grierson mounted, lugging up with him a heavy stone.

After getting settled, he listened intently for a few minutes, and hearing nothing to alarm him, muttered:

"All right; no one has seen me enter this tree. I am safe, and when they find him in the morning they will never think of me. Hal Herrick—curses on your head—you have bearded and bullied me long enough, but you never will again—ha! ha! never!"

But had he been unseen?

Not twenty-five feet away, crouching among the bushes, were two villainous-looking men who had been hanging around Beechwood for several days; their silence, their being concealed, all spoke more strongly than words of some hideous, dark project.

They saw Bob mount the tree.

"Wonder what's up?" queried one.

"Give it up," was the reply. "It has a queer look, a fellow getting up into a tree that way—hey, Dick?"

"It does so. What do you make of it, Sly?"

"I don't make anything of it at all," was the reply. "Could any one have gotten wind of our affair?"

"Bah! no. Shall we move a little ways further away from this neighbor? I don't like him."

"Nor I."

Stealthily emerging, but keeping close in to the edge of the bushes, they sneaked along, entering the bushes again at a point a hundred feet from the tree, preferring to be thus close than lose sight of the mysterious presence of the unknown person in the tree.

Throwing themselves flat on the ground they watched and waited for the coming of somebody.

"He'd ought to be along soon, hey, Dick?" said Sly, in a low tone.

"We can expect him now any minute," said the other. "We want to make sure of him the first clip, too; are you all ready?"

"Yes. They say the young fellow will fight like a tiger if you give him the chance."

"So I've heard; he takes after his old man for that. The old 'un was an officer in the army, and they tell me a regular fire-eater."

"I suppose, Dick, there'll be no doubt about the pay for this 'ere job?"

"None at all."

With a satisfied grunt Sly became quiet for the minute, and then he asked:

"Has this young Herrick any friends who will shove any inquiry into his death, offer any reward, or put the detectives on our track?"

"No. He's got money enough now of his own, but once dead he's not got a friend in the world to spend a cent on him for more than six feet of earth and a coffin, and only that for decency's sake."

Ah! Hal Herrick, pause where you are, remain all night beneath that hospitable roof, but as you value your life, attempt not to cross the "flats," for this was the local name of the place.

Oh! could some good angel have warned him of the dangers ahead, as he stood on the piazza, holding Minnie's hand in his own ere he said good-night.

"Good-night, Miss Mason," he said, in a tone showing regret at the necessity of parting.

"Good-night, Mr. Herrick. I shall always be pleased to see you."

"Thank you; I shall avail myself of your kind invitation if my company gives you pleasure. May I hope that it does?"

The girl was silent for an instant, and then she slowly murmured:

"If it did not, I should not have asked you."

Something in the tone, a slight pressure of the hand, caused Hal's heart to beat hard and fast, and on the impulse of the moment he put his arm about her waist and kissed her.

Aware that he had overstepped the bounds, he disengaged his arm, and with a hasty: "Excuse me, I forgot myself," he bade her good-night again, addressing her as Minnie, and then hurried away.

Dreamily he pursued his way toward the academy, and bright pictures of what might be were engrossing every sense, when he stepped on the plank walk.

The echo of his footsteps on the planks partially recalled him. Many a poor fellow had been caught alone in this spot, and given a severe drubbing.

He passed along at a swinging pace, keeping his ears open and hands ready.

He was within a few feet of the tree concealing his enemy, when he paused suddenly, a presentiment of danger having swept across his mind with resistless force; he half turned aside to pursue his way in the middle of the road, but his was too brave and defiant a nature to permit himself to be governed by idle fears, and laughing at his feelings he determined to conquer them.

He took one, two, three steps; was exactly beneath the tree when a rustling noise startled him; then he would have sprung to one side.

Too late!

With the expression of a demon, Bob Grierson poised the rock and hurled it with fearfully accurate aim at the head of his hated rival.

CHAPTER IV.

MONEY AS A ROOT OF EVIL.

Bob Grierson slid down from the tree and approached the body. One minute he knelt beside the form of his ancient enemy, and then springing to his feet he fled; his footsteps died away in the distance, and then all was silence, dread and grim.

"Did you hear that, Dick?"

"Yes."

"Let's see what it means."

They stole softly to the spot, saw the pool of blood, and then Sly said:

"Some one's done the job for us, it seems."

"Yes," was Dick's reply.

"Shall we leave it here?"

"No; let's chuck it into the slough over there."

Picking up the body they carried it a few hundred feet to a slough or morass through which a muddy brook ran.

"Now!" exclaimed Dick.

Splash!

The body of Hal Herrick struck into the soft mud of the slough; then the villains turned their light on him for a minute, and with a hearty guffaw of satisfaction hurried away, fully convinced that ere morning the marsh would cover all that remained to tell of the horrid crime so recently perpetrated.

But a kind Providence had reserved him for a better fate than that, and though they declared him dead as a door nail, such was not the case; there still remained in his body a spark of the vital fire, and, strange to say, it must have flickered and gone out in darkness but for the very movements of the cold-blooded ruffians.

In seeking to insure his death they flung him into the marsh, and the coolness of the mud, as it clung closely to his badly wounded head, acted as a soothing application would have done, besides stopping the flow of blood and preventing inflammation.

He lay unconscious for hours, and it was only as day was breaking that his senses returned.

As soon as he understood where he was he crawled out on the firmer ground, the exertion necessary to accomplish this feat leaving him in a deathly faint from which he did not recover for a long while.

He heard the rattle of a wagon as it passed on the road beyond and determined to cry out for help; his lips parted, but he was surprised when he found that the sound which issued was barely more than a whisper.

A most frightful pain racked his head, his temples throbbed until they seemed ready to burst, and more than once sheer force or will alone prevented his drifting away into unconsciousness, which, occurring now, meant absolute death.

Raising his head from the tuft of grass on which it was pillowed, he gazed about him, struggling hard to get things straight, for with his spinning brain nothing appeared permanently located, now he saw a bush directly ahead of him, then quick as a flash it was at the right side of him, then on the left, next within reach of his hand, and then far beyond it.

In this hour of agony he prayed for aid from on high that he might be gifted with strength to make himself heard or to make his way as far as the road.

By a superhuman effort he steadied his vision and brain long enough to locate the precise position of the bush whose antics had puzzled him; the blind clutch which followed proved successful, and he gripped his fingers around the bottom of several pieces of brush the size of a whip handle.

Resting a minute he concentrated his strength, and after a fearful struggle managed to drag himself several feet ahead. His agonies were excruciating to the last degree, but that pluck for which he had ever been noted would not suffer him to give in while he could draw a breath, and battling against his weakness, resting each time he gained a few inches, he worked his way toward the road.

Three weary hours were consumed in going less than a hundred feet, and then he made one grand effort, and dragged himself into the open space between the road and the brush of the swamp.

Some one was passing.

Once more he tried to find his voice, and he was able to utter a faint cry for help.

He saw the person stop, then start towards him; presently he heard his name uttered, and recognized the voices, his ears being more acute than his eyes were certain; and in reply to their exclamation he feebly waved his hand, then sank flat on his back.

"My heaven! Hal Herrick, what is the meaning of this? Can this be you in such a condition?"

"Hal Herrick it is," he faintly said; "and completely used up at that."

"You met some of the Instituturs; they were too many for you, and nearly murdered you!" cried one, his cheeks flushing hotly, his brows knitting and fists clenching. "Just say the word, Hal, and Sam and I will go and clean out the whole blame shebang."

Had Hal said the one word wanted the two fellows would have started on a dead run for the Institute, and not have left it until they had cleaned out the darned shebang, or been pitched out neck and heels; as it was, Hal shook his head, faintly smiled at the expression of good will, then weakly said:

"A doctor, boys; I'll need some patching up."

Lifting him between them, making a sort of chair with their hands, Hal putting an arm around the neck of each, they carried him to the road and to the house of a physician not far distant.

After the bell had been rung, while they were waiting to be admitted, one of the boys drew the other's attention to a person who was passing the house at a swinging pace; Hal also raised his head, and just as he was being carried inside, his eyes encountered those of Bob Grierson.

The face of the latter was pale and scared-looking, and Hal thought instantly—he could not tell why—that Bob knew more than he did himself as to how he came by the awful gash in his head.

"Hum!" grunted the doctor. "A bad cut—very bad—but luckily without much inflammation. How did you keep it down, and—hush, not a word, I should not have asked you any questions, for you are not fit to answer any," said the doctor, as Hal had opened his lips to reply and then with many a kindly word of encouragement he endeavored to cheer Hal up, as he inflicted on him the exquisite but necessary pain of washing and dressing his wound.

Hal was well known to the doctor, who, seeing the weakened condition he was in, at once firmly insisted on the wounded lad's becoming an inmate of his house for the present.

For two weeks he remained under the doctor's care, and then he was reported convalescent, though still unable to resume his old place in his class or lead the boys of the academy, the boss school of Beechwood, against their sworn enemies, the Instituturs.

"I would advise your going home for a week or so to rest quietly," said the doctor one evening.

"Home!" repeated Hal, in a vacant tone, as if the word awakened no tender memories.

"Yes, home. Say the word, my boy, and I'll attend to your passage by stage and rail. Will you start to-morrow?"

At this direct question Hal fidgeted uneasily and averted his eyes as the doctor looked him in the face; after a silence of a minute or so he replied thoughtfully:

"I don't know, sir; I'd rather stay here at school if I could."

"And then—you might as well finish—the first fine day you're out, the war cry will go forth, and you'll get this numbskull of yours cracked again. No, sir, home you must go, and there you must stay at least a week or ten days."

To this fiat of the doctor Hal acquiesced with a sigh, and the next day when the stage moved up the main street of Beechwood he was one of its passengers; the news of his intended going had reached the academy, and fully half a hundred of his schoolmates had gathered to give him a send-off.

"Three cheers for Hal Herrick, the champion of the 'boss school!'" shouted one of the boys, who had found him at the swamp, and instantly the others caught up the cry until the streets rang again.

Then came a tiger, and the stage was off.

Some of those with whom he had been most intimate ran about a mile, keeping up with the stage, which they now brought to a standstill until they could shake hands with their brave leader, and wish him a safe journey and a speedy return.

About ten o'clock the next morning he left the train.

At first he thought of taking a carriage, but on second thought determined to walk the short distance to his home.

It was a short half mile, and ordinarily he would have walked the distance in six or seven minutes; but on the present occasion he took a full half hour, as much from dislike to approaching his home as from weakness.

Finally he came in sight of the large, old-fashioned rambling house that had been the home of four generations of Herricks; and with misty eyes and faltering voice he murmured:

"Poor father—poor father!"

This was the first time Hal had set eyes on the place in a year, and that was when he had returned from school to pay the last tribute of respect to his father, who had died somewhat suddenly.

Hal's mother had died when he was quite young; his father had married some years after, a widow with one son, a year Hal's junior; dying, Mr. Herrick had left all he possessed to Hal, reserving a life interest in part to his second wife, but in case of Hal's death the property itself would pass absolutely into her hands.

This woman was tall, dark complexioned, with small, scintillating black eyes, which being fastened on a person seemed to pierce to the very soul; Hal had ever disliked her, and soon learned to positively hate the son, close companionship with whom had disclosed many mean, contemptible traits.

Musing over the past Hal reached the gate, opened it, and passed up the gravel walk toward the house unconscious of being observed, until a well-known and loved voice reached his ear:

"Foah de heaven, chile, but I've powerful s'prised an' glad to see you back."

"Ah!" cried Hal, a smile brightening his face. "How are you, Uncle Neb?" and seizing the aged negro's hand, he wrung it as heartily as his strength would permit. "And how is Chloë, and Bruno, the dog?"

"Bofe well, Massa Hal," said Neb, in a full voice, and then asked in a low tone: "Is you expected up to the house?"

"No, but needn't announce me. I'll go right in."

And Hal, though the owner of the house, entered it with about such feelings as a beggar might have done, for he knew how scant a welcome he would receive.

Hearing voices in the sitting-room he directed his steps thither, and there found mother and son; Mrs. Herrick glanced up at sound of footsteps, and when her eyes lighted on Hal the color fled from her cheek, her lips parted, and

gasping for breath she sank on a sofa as if about to swoon. Recovering herself quickly, she advanced toward him, and giving him the tips of her fingers, coldly said:

"Welcome home, though your coming is rather unexpected. I hope you have not disgraced yourself, and been turned out of school."

"Let others be as careful of the good name of Herrick, and it will never be blurred," replied Hal, quietly. "How are you, Ben?" he said to his stepbrother.

"Good enough! What brings you home? Been sick?—you look pale."

"Yes; I've had a tough pull of it recently, and have come home to build up."

Mrs. Herrick's sharp eyes were gleaming strangely, and Hal fidgeted uneasily beneath her gaze, so he made the interview short by inquiring if his room were ready for him.

"It is."

"Then I will go to it," he said, with which he left the room and started up the stairs to his own; he remained there but a few minutes, and was on his way downstairs when he heard Ben leaving the house with an oath on his lips; Mrs. Herrick followed him as far as the front door, and then turned back into the sitting-room, as Hal passed the door of which he was startled by hearing these words:

"Then he is not dead after all, and all my plotting has come to naught. But I'll not back out now—no—no—I sold myself for money, and money I will have though I sell my soul to the devil to get it."

As if in a dream Hal stole gently along the hall and into the yard.

Did they, could they—these words—refer to him?

His very soul recoiled with horror at the thought that this woman, who had been the wife of his father, could be so vile and foul-hearted.

"I'll not believe it!" he cried inwardly. "My ears have deceived me."

Ah, better it would have been had he not so decided, for he was running himself into greater danger.

Money—money! What black deeds are committed for thy sake!

Into the glass of water placed on the stand beside his bed was thrown a small white powder, and growing thirsty in the night that glass of water was drunk.

CHAPTER V.

A DEMON-LIKE WOMAN.

Mrs. Herrick had married Mr. Herrick solely for his money, and at his death, when she found everything had been left to Hal, her rage knew no bounds, and standing alone beside the coffin, she actually smote the dead man in the face, as she hissed:

"Curse you for an old fool! Everything goes to Hal, and not one penny to my boy—but I'll provide for him though I upset heaven and hell to do it!"

A woman of strong unreasoning passion, she idolized that dark-faced son of hers, perhaps because he so resembled her; his skin was sallow and entirely destitute of even a suspicion of the manly appendage known as a beard; his eyes were as black and sharp as his mother's, and had withal a snaky look that as much as said:

"Beware of me, I am dangerous."

Mr. Herrick had married the woman, knowing little or nothing of her family, after an acquaintance of only a few months, having been fascinated by a certain dashiness of manner. Had he known more of her the marriage would never have taken place, and indeed he never knew or saw any of her relatives as long as he lived.

Two days after the night when Hal so nearly lost his life, two men appeared in the village and put up at a low tavern; after night had fallen one of them left the place and went straight to the Herrick house.

"Well, sis, here I am," he said, in a familiar tone, while he coolly crossed his legs and spit into the grate. "Nice parlor this. I grow more in love with it every time I see it."

An expression of disgust was craftily concealed by Mrs. Herrick, who, after a moment's pause, uttered a meaning:

"Well?"

The man nodded.

"Is it done?"

"It is."

"There's no doubt about it?"

"Not the slightest; he's deader'n a door nail. But I say, sis, you've got things scrumptious, ain't you? Don't look much like the time when we were with the old woman, and I played footpad and you picked women's pockets in church."

"Hush!" she fiercely exclaimed. "Not another word of this."

"Hoity—toity! On your ear, hey? Ha, ha, ha! Well, it's the truth, and well do I remember the time when you hitched to Val Larue, the noted pickpocket. How's his brat, anyhow?"

"Dick Morrough," hissed the woman, "beware how you anger me. Do not go too far, for I have that right here which will silence you," and from the bosom of her dress she produced a small pearl-handled revolver.

"What!" cried the man in pretended horror. "Murder your own brother! No—no—you could not. How happy you must have been at meeting me two weeks ago, after a separation of so many years."

"Happy!" she answered. "I will be plain with you and say it would have afforded me greater pleasure to have met you dead."

"No doubt of it," said the villain coolly. "Yet having met me, you were willing enough to employ me in one of your schemes. The money, sis?"

"Here it is," and she flung him a roll of bills which he clutched at as a hungry dog would at a bone. "Now you've got your blood-money—go—and never darken my door again."

"Be careful, you Jezebel!" cried Dick, his anger rising. "Remember, I can hang you at will."

With flaming eyes she sprang upon him and in one second had the muzzle of the revolver at his temple.

"One more such threat and I'll put a bullet in your brain. You knew me in the old time, and know I can do and dare anything."

Before Dick could make reply the door opened and Ben Larue stood on the threshold, thunderstruck at the scene presented to his view.

"What means this? Who is this ill-dressed villain?"

"Speak, sis, and tell him the truth. Tell Val Larue's whelp who I am."

"Speak. Who is he?"

"My—brother, and—your—uncle," gasped Mrs. Herrick.

"My uncle."

"Yes," sneered Dick. "Didn't know the ill-dressed villain was your uncle or you would have treated him more respectfully, eh?"

"There is some mystery here; I don't understand it," said Ben.

"Shall I tell him, sis, why I am here?" meaningly asked the assassin.

"I can do that myself," was the cold reply.

For one minute the trio gazed fixedly at each other, and then Dick calmly arose, buttoned up his coat, and with a mocking good-night strode from the room. He returned after going a few steps to say:

"When I'm in need of money, sis, I'll be frank with you in letting you know it, that you may have the pleasure of providing it for me."

Then he was gone for good.

"There is some secret between you two," said Ben, after Dick had been gone several minutes. "Now, what is it?"

"There is no secret between us, except this—I don't want people to know that such a man is my brother, and have paid him well to leave the place at once."

Ben's black, snaky eyes were fastened on his mother, and though he said nothing aloud, he mentally exclaimed:

"Old gal, I believe you lie like blazes. However, I'll find out what it is, by fair means or foul."

The next day he visited the tavern to see Dick Morrough, but found that he had disappeared.

And Mrs. Herrick, reaching her own room, laughed exultingly, and rubbed her hands together as she muttered:

"That was a bold strike, but a good one. Now is the wrong that was done me righted. Hal Herrick is dead, and all these broad acres and stocks and bonds and invested moneys are mine—and Ben's. Now to wait calmly until the news of his death arrives."

But the expected news did not arrive, and the she-tigress was in a very uneasy frame of mind when Hal, pale and weak, so suddenly appeared before her, giving her a fearful shock.

Having thorough control over herself, she had listened calmly to his story, and fiend that she was, at once began

plotting anew to compass his death and thus secure to herself the wealth left by Hal's father.

But just here we must turn our attention to Dick Morrough and his pal, Peter Sly.

Early the following morning the villainous twain skipped out of town; a ride of a few hours by rail took them to a city in the vile haunts of which they were well acquainted, in which they spent about a week in wild carousal on the money Dick had received from his sister.

At the end of this time both were disgusted with their drunk and resolved to quit the place.

But where to go?

They had talked over the affair of Hal Herrick's attack by an unknown hand, and at Pete's suggestion they decided to go to Beechwood and endeavor to spot the fellow and if possible make him buy their silence at a good round price.

Acting on this, they were soon at Beechwood, when for the first time they learned that Hal had not been killed, after all; this, however, changed none of their plans as regarded the person they were bent on discovering, and going to work with the skill of regular detectives, they soon learned who Hal's enemies were, first of all and above all other being Bob Grierson.

Slowly but surely they spun their web, each day finding some new reason to think that in its meshes they held Hal Herrick's would-be assassin.

"He is the chap and no mistake," said Sly, in a tone of conviction.

"I believe so, too. And, Sly, I move that you collar the fellow and bone him, and when you do, give it to him right and left."

"Never fear for that," was the grim-voiced reply.

Meanwhile time had not stood still, and it was now more than three weeks since Bob Grierson had so nearly ended Hal's life.

When young Grierson fled the spot after satisfying himself that his victim was really dead, it was accompanied by a feeling of horror akin to hell itself, and more than once he glanced over his shoulder with starting eyeballs.

Such a night as he spent! It was fearful; he lay there on the bed, every muscle strained, the sweat streaming from every pore.

In agony of mind he arose, dressed himself, and left the house at daylight, and he never experienced as great a relief as when he saw Hal Herrick alive; but strange to say, no sooner was it decided that Hal would recover, than all his old burning hate came back, and he went nearly crazy when he heard that Minnie Mason had sent Hal a basket of flowers to brighten up his room.

"WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HAL HERRICK'S NEAR APPROACH TO DEATH?"

This was the heading of a two-column article in the local paper at Beechwood, and among other pertinent questions asked in the article was "Can it have been done by any of the boys of the institute—is it possible that the feud could be carried so far? We emphatically declare it to be the duty of the principals of these rival schools to come to some friendly understanding and try to create a better state of feeling between the boys. If they do not and such a thing should occur again, fathers would fear for the lives of their sons, would withdraw them, and the schools would close for want of patronage. Consider well, gentlemen, and act accordingly."

"Verily, he showeth much common sense," mused Obadiah Strong. "Already is it hard enough to make ends meet without losing any of my pupils."

"Blame the luck!" was Grierson's comment; "and blame the Quaker, too. I suppose I'll have to patch up an appearance of good will," making a grimace as if taking some horrid dose.

At a public meeting the two professors shook hands in token of amity, and while they glared hatred at each other, discussed the means of bringing the boys into a state of fellowship and good-feeling.

A jumping-match was proposed as a new and untried diversion, and for a wonder both agreed that it was a good idea and forthwith made arrangements as to time and place.

On the part of the instituters, Bob Grierson took the lead, and the academy elected as captain Denny Willbury, a warm friend of Hal's, and one of the two who had carried him to the doctor's.

Bob Grierson had been to the village one night and was

on his way home when he was suddenly confronted by Peter Sly.

"What do you want?" demanded Bob, thinking the other a tramp.

"I want you for attempting to murder Hal Herrick!" said Sly gruffly, springing the mine suddenly.

"Great heavens!" gasped Bob, sinking in terror at Sly's feet.

CHAPTER VI.

RIVALS TO THE DEATH.

Sly could wish for no better admission of guilt than that of Bob's being so terror-stricken, and he at once began to play upon his fears by telling him that he was a detective.

But Bob soon began to recover his wits, and boldly denied the charge.

"Come—come," said Sly gruffly, "you can't gammon me, for I saw the thing done. You were up in a tree and hurled the rock down on his head."

"Then you saw me?" gasped Bob, giving himself completely away.

"I did," was the reply. "But see here, young fellow, this thing rests atwixt you and I, and I don't feel particularly hard against you, seeing the amount of aggravation he was to you, and it rests with you whether anybody else knows it or not."

"How? Why?"

"For a consideration I will keep my tongue between my teeth."

"What is the consideration? Name it."

"Five hundred dollars."

"Five hundred!" groaned Bob. "You might as well ask for five thousand!"

"Can't you raise it?"

"No."

"Maybe if I went to your old man and told him how matters stood he might fix up the amount to save you."

"The old man!" exclaimed Bob. "Good heavens, no. Say two hundred, and I'll get it, if I can."

"Two hundred, then, but that much you must get or I'll split on you."

"I'll try," said Bob, his voice trembling with fear. "Does—does anybody but yourself know of this?"

"No," promptly replied Sly. "Now, when can I expect this and where will you meet me?"

"Day after to-morrow for time; and for place—I go out nearly every day between sunset and dark for a pull on the river. Meet me a mile or two up the river, just about dark."

"Good enough! Don't forget me, or you'll rue it," with which threatening remark Sly parted with Bob.

In the dead of night he stole into his father's study and opened the safe, intending to abstract two hundred dollars, but a bare ten dollars was all he could find, and pale as a ghost with terror, with visions of prison looming up before his eyes, he returned to his own room; once he resolved to fly the country, but on second thought determined to wait until the following night, by which time he would be better prepared.

The following day fate brought him face to face with Sly, and a suspicion of the man's true character flashed across Bob's mind.

"He's no detective," muttered Bob.

From that instant his brain began to teem with new thoughts.

With a desperate look of resolve on his face he started out to meet Sly, according to arrangement; they met two miles up the river at a spot where there was no house within half a mile in any direction.

"Got the money?" growled Sly.

"Yes, but I'm afraid we are watched, and don't dare give it to you. Can you see a boat just over there?"

"No," said Sly, after a minute's gaze in the direction indicated.

"Maybe you can see it if you stand up," said Bob. "Make sure, for I don't want to be seen."

Growling at this request, Sly arose to his feet; quick as a flash Bob dipped his oars and ran the prow of his boat into Sly's, throwing him over into the water.

"Blame you!" hissed Sly, as he spat the water from his mouth after rising to the surface. "You did that on purpose."

"I did!" cried Bob, with savage accent, "and I do this on purpose, too!"

Sly had just reached up to grasp the gunwale of his boat as Bob uttered these words; then a cry of horror escaped the villain, for he saw that Bob, whom he had considered so completely under his thumb, had a revolver aimed at his head.

He attempted to save himself by diving quickly, but was too late by the fraction of a second.

Crack!

A single sharp, whip-like report, followed by a mortal groan, and Sly sank beneath the water, a corpse, with a leaden bullet in his brain, while Bob Grierson, with that horrible feeling once more upon him, pulled away from the spot at a terrific pace.

For the next two days he felt as if in the midst of some horrible nightmare, not so much on account of the deed itself as from fear of discovery; as the chances of this grew less he grew more confident, flung off that awful dread, and threw himself body and soul into the jumping match.

"If Hal Herrick can only get here?" wishfully said Denny Willbury one night. "He is getting better, I know, and must be well now."

Ah! he little knew how near his friend was to a horrible death at that very minute.

The water Hal drank was poisoned, and he had no sooner swallowed it than he muttered:

"What a queer taste that water had. Could anything have gotten into it?"

At almost the same minute he became conscious of a burning feeling in his stomach, which every second grew more and more intense, while his muscles began to twitch spasmodically.

Like a flash came to his mind the words he had overheard his stepmother use, and an awful damning suspicion arose with meteor swiftness.

"I am poisoned!" he gasped. "Good heavens! what shall I do? Oh, for an emetic, but—"

That very day he had seen a mother cause her choking baby to gag up a fishbone by sticking her finger in his mouth; quick as thought he struck his finger down his throat, causing himself to vomit freely, and then seizing a candle, he bolted it whole, grease being a well-known antidote for many poisons.

The two things combined saved his life, though only himself and heaven ever knew the agony he suffered that night both in body and mind.

He thought of charging his stepmother with attempting to poison him, but ere morning dawned had changed his mind.

"Poor father! He's in his grave, and I'll not do aught to cast a blur on the name he kept unsullied. No, vile though she may be, I'll leave her at once and let her enjoy this property while she lives. 'Tis best so."

With a heavy heart he descended to the breakfast table.

"You look pale! Have you been ill?" Mrs. Herrick asked.

"I was during the night," said Hal, looking sternly at her. "I drank the water beside my bed, and at once began to vomit. That glass of water must have been tampered with."

She quailed before his glance.

"That could hardly be."

"It was, though."

That very day he started away to visit an old-time friend, and while there he received a letter from Denny informing him of the state of affairs at school and of the proposed jumping match.

"I must be there to see it!" exclaimed Hal. "I'm O. K. once more; my head has completely healed and I'm as strong as an ox again," and while the match was in progress Hal Herrick sauntered upon the green.

The boys caught sight of him, and such a shout as they sent up!—it was fairly ear splitting, and some of the cranky maiden ladies of uncertain years clapped their hands over their ears and declared that it was awful.

The match was nearly ended and the academy stood one inch in advance of the institute boys.

Bob Grierson scowled at sight of Hal Herrick, for the latter was famous in a jump, but recollecting himself, Bob sent forward another of his men, whispering to him:

"Do your best; we've got only one more try after you."

The young fellow stood motionless one minute, then gathered his muscles and took a long leap, and—the instituters uttered a yell of delight, for he had bettered the longest jump by a good half inch.

"How many more jumps are you entitled to?" asked Hal, in a low tone.

"Two."

"And who is to jump?"

"Dobbins and I."

Dobbins was already toeing the mark, and making an effort, went half an inch better than his preceding competitor, at which the academy boys crowed loudly.

Bob Grierson now stepped forward, measured the distance with his eye, sprang, and alighted squarely another inch in the advance; turning quickly, he shot a triumphant glance at Hal Herrick, then turned his gaze to where Minnie Mason stood, holding in her hand the prize, a beautiful belt, and a wreath of laurels with which to crown the victor.

Hal saw and understood, and a feeling of resentment stirred within him; he glanced at Denny, who was looking aghast at Bob's jump.

"Denny, will you let me take your place?" asked Hal.

"Certainly."

Flinging off his coat, Hal walked forward and toed the mark, saying to Bob Grierson near by:

"We are rivals again, it seems."

"Ay!" hissed Grierson, bending forward. "Ay—rivals to the death."

"To the death be it, but your death, not mine. I'll beat you at every point, and to-day will wrest the belt and laurel wreath from you."

Bob's only reply was a malignant look, scorning to notice which, Hal prepared to jump.

Carefully he poised himself, and the crowd held their breath and waited impatiently for the result.

Then Hal's body arose in the air, he went flying forward, his legs in the advance, and—

"Hurrah—hurrah for the academy! He's won—he's won—Hal Herrick forever! Three cheers for the boss school of Beechwood!"

Hal had won beyond dispute, and won by a full three inches.

Two minutes later he knelt before the fair young girl, who blushing crowned him and presented him with the belt; galled and stung to the quick, Bob Grierson stood it all until he saw Hal kiss the hand that crowned him, when, cursing madly, he rushed away.

"Be careful of that Grierson," said Denny to Hal that afternoon. "He'll do you any mischief in his power."

"I'm not afraid of such reptiles as he," Hal replied.

He was back in his old room that night and slept peacefully as a babe, as also the nights of a week following, and then one night he was suddenly awakened by feeling a hand placed suddenly on his mouth; he tried to break loose, but could not, for his senses were being enthralled by chloroform, and despite his utmost efforts to the contrary, consciousness fled.

How long he remained so he never knew, but when he awoke it was to find himself stretched in his bed, bound hand and foot, while flames were darting up in half a dozen different parts of his room.

It was an awful situation, and froze the blood in his veins.

"Who is this fiend, this unknown enemy of mine?" gasped Hal. "Great heavens, am I to be burned to death?"

CHAPTER VII.

WHO FIRED THE ACADEMY?

"Great heavens!" groaned Hal Herrick, "who could have been so fiendish as to bind me thus and then start a fire in the room?"

Truly, none but a fiend could have been guilty of such an action, yet, sad to say, that was not the first, nor will it be the last of similar fearful acts, the result of human passions uncontrolled.

Brighter and brighter the flames grew, darting up their lurid tongues and hungrily licking the dry casements of doors and the woodwork about the room, while the inmates of the building slept peacefully, unaware that the fire demon was at work.

But suddenly the scene changed; a startled voice cried:

"Fire!"

And then it was caught up and repeated in wild-voiced accents.

"Fire!"

Louder still it grew.

"Fire!"

Then came a scene of wild excitement and terrified haste,

and half dressed youths rushed out of doors and gathered on the lawn, among the first of whom was Denny Wilbury.

"Oh—oh—oh!" was wailed, in a lackadaisical voice. "I'm ruined! Verily, the flesh must suffer at beholding such destruction."

The boys could not contain themselves when this speech had drawn their attention to Obadiah Strong, who had not stopped to dress after leaping out of bed, and now stood on the lawn barefooted, clad in a long gown of red flannel, his poll surmounted by a night-cap of similar material adorned with a tassel.

This burst of merriment occurred at a very good time, and served to dispel the first feeling of terror felt by the boys, and when Denny recovered his presence of mind and planned out a course to follow, they responded with alacrity to his summons; selecting his men at a single sweeping glance, Denny briskly ordered:

"Tom—Jake—go for the engine! Pete, take three others and bring the ladders from the trees in the orchard. The rest of you go into the kitchen and lay hands on anything and everything that will carry water."

"Verily, Denny, thou art right," groaned Obadiah. "I hope thee may be successful."

"We can conquer this fire, and we will," said Denny resolutely. "To work, boys—to work with a will!"

Those brave lads needed no more urging, but rushed away on their respective errands, while Denny remained behind to better locate the exact spot where the fire was greatest.

All at once it rushed upon him as he saw the flames dart through a window that it belonged to Hal's room.

Where was Hal? He had surely not yet seen him!

Denny glanced around and piercingly gazed in turn at each of the shadowy figures hurrying around; none of them was Hal's.

"Heavens!" gasped Denny. "He must be in his room yet and that's all on fire. Hal—Hal!"

Wildly he shouted and then paused to listen for the reply that did not come; again and again he shrieked Hal's name, but the hoped-for, prayed-for response was not given.

"Great heavens!" moaned Denny, "can he have already succumbed! He is not outside and must still be there. The ladders, boys, the ladders!"

They were coming on a run, but not fast enough to suit Denny, who sprang to meet them and hurried them along still faster; up it went and then Denny jumped upon it and mounted to the window, but ere he could gain a view of the interior was driven back by a scorching blast.

Again and again he tried it, and his bravery was rewarded after he had made a dozen trials, but the sight that met his gaze was so frightful a one that he almost wished at the moment that he had not seen it, for the glance he obtained showed him how little hope there was of rescuing his friend, whose awful death, if it now took place, would be riveted painfully on Denny's mind as long as he lived.

He saw Hal lying motionless on the bed, saw that his hands were bound; the bedding was on fire, and even at that moment was licking Hal's night-clothing and flesh with its scorching tongues; Hal's face, with an expression of agony written in every line, was turned toward the window; his eyes encountered Denny's, and, oh, the prayer for help there was in Hal's glance.

Denny reeled and nearly fell from the ladder, but caught himself just in time to prevent a heavy fall; once more he attempted to get a look into the room, but a hot blast drove him back, and feeling in his heart that if Hal was to be saved, it would only be by entering his room from the inside of the house, he descended halfway, then jumped to the ground.

With a face working with anguish of feeling, and voice choking with emotion, Denny addressed his schoolfellows:

"Boys, Hal Herrick is in his room helpless. The bed on which he lies is on fire. I am going to help him. Who will follow?"

"I—I—I!" was shouted on all sides. "Never let it be said that the 'boss school' deserted one who had led her to many a victory."

"Bravo!"

Away they went with a rush, regardless of danger, only aware that a well-loved and gallant comrade was in danger and must be rescued regardless of cost.

And Hal?

He had watched the advance of the fire with feelings that can be better imagined than described; just try, reader, to picture yourself in the same position, bound hand and

foot, completely helpless, and the flames drawing nearer and nearer; first the air becomes a little heated, but feels only a trifle dry; but soon it becomes drier and has a strange, stifling heat about it that causes you to gasp; then hotter still, until at each respiration blisters form on your lips, then they burst, water is discharged; the skin shrivels, dries—cracks—and blood begins to flow.

Terrible—terrible! The pen may outline such a picture, but can never describe the horrors of such a scene; and then add to the physical tortures the acute agony of the mind as it realizes that these blisters and pains are but the beginning of still more frightful and final agonies.

Hal bore up as bravely as he could, but he was human, and more than one groan was wrenched from him; at first he had hopes of being rescued, but as time passed and the fire grew nearer, this hope began to fade and he made up his mind to accept the inevitable.

Then he saw the face of Denny at the window, and once more a wild hope entered his heart; but as he saw that friendly face disappear, not to be seen again, the hope died as suddenly as it had been born.

But, hark! There is a tramp of feet in the hall; is it a rescuing party?

Crash!

"Oh, heaven in mercy grant them strength!" prayed Hal, as the door resisted the weight thrown against it. Denny, however, was not discouraged by the failure of his first effort, and calling several boys by name, he cried:

"Come to this side of the hall, and when I give the word let's all strike together. Now!"

Several bounds carried them across the hall, and they all struck the door with their shoulders at the same instant, causing it to tremble and quiver, yet without sweeping it from their path.

"Once more!" cried Denny. "Now!"

C-c-c-cr-crash!

Away went the door, splitting off lock and hinges, and the blazing room was exposed to view.

Once the fiery curtain lifted and they all saw Hal lying on the bed.

"Your water!" exclaimed Denny. "Dash it on, quick!"

Hiss—splutter—splash!

"Two of you follow me, and turn up your coat collars," said Denny, in a tone seemingly calm, but beneath which could be discerned a fearful excitement. "Lower your heads to protect your faces! After me!"

Right inside the door was a space of six feet in width where the fire had already eaten away the flooring; clearing this burning chasm at a bound, Denny recklessly rushed through the flames to the bedside; there he turned to hasten on his comrades, but had no need of this, for they were right beside him.

"Pick him up!" cried Denny. "Now, back to the door."

Hal's clothing was burning, and the hands that lifted him were scorched instantly, but with a grim compression of the lips, the boys smothered their pain and started toward the door.

"Ready, outside!" yelled Denny. "Off with your coats, some of you. Here, catch him!"

"One—two—three—now!"

Having swung Hal several times back and forth, they launched him in the air across the burning chasm, to be received in the arms of warm friends.

They speedily carried him into the hall, and laying him on the floor, smothered the flames with their coats, by which time Denny having arrived, he ordered him carried to a room on the ground floor of a wing of the building, which the fire could not reach in a full quarter hour, even were the entire structure doomed.

"Cook, you must be quiet and attend to Hal!" said Denny sternly, and leaving the suffering lad in her care, he sprang away to see what could be done toward battling with the fire-fiend.

Denny was quick-witted and had the admirable faculty of being able to devise and act at once.

In less than five minutes he had the boys thoroughly organized, and doing all that boys could do under any circumstances.

Conquer the fire Denny saw that they could not, but keep it at bay they could and did until the engines arrived; there was much lukewarm work on the part of one engine, mostly managed by the elder boys of the institute, but the other was more than a master for such a fire, and after an hour's hard work the last spark was extinguished beneath the deluge of water.

The fire had drawn crowds of men from the village, and among them the physician who had before attended Hal, who hearing how matters stood, visited him at once; when first he caught sight of the young fellow the physician looked grave, but after a careful examination of him he actually smiled.

"You're all right, Hal," he said cheerfully. "Bad burns, and lots of 'em, but nothing even serious."

The fire had been out some time, but still the crowd lingered.

They had heard of Hal's being in the burning room and waited for news of him, and none was more intensely interested than a pale-faced youth who kept on the outer edge of the crowd. At length the doctor understood what they were waiting for, and went outside.

"Friends, young Herrick has had a narrow escape, but thank heaven he is in no danger, and a few days will put him on his feet as sound as a new dollar."

CHAPTER VIII.

THREE OF A KIND.

One thing was very clear to Hal, that whoever had set the academy on fire had aimed particularly at his destruction; it did not take long for him to reach a conclusion, which was to keep his suspicions to himself and prevent spreading the fact that he had been found tied hand and foot.

Denny and the two companions who had so bravely entered his room and carried him out, of a necessity knew of his being bound, but the others who had been in the hall were so excited as to have overlooked even more than this; so Hal bound the former to say nothing, and to no one else but the physician were the facts of the case made known, and only to him because he had proved himself such a warm friend to the young fellow before.

As for the people, they wondered the usual nine days as to who set the academy on fire, and then gradually forgot that it had ever occurred.

Obadiah had carpenters at work the very next day, and soon no trace remained of the fire which had so nearly proved Hal's death.

Hal set himself to thinking.

There was the affair of the poison; then flashed into his mind the strange agitation of his stepmother at first seeing him; could it be possible that she had instigated these attacks, and that after the first, supposing him dead, she had given way to a very natural alarm at seeing him alive before her?

But who could she have procured to carry out her hellish plans, if the assaults on his life had been planned by her? She surely could not carry them out herself.

He thought of his dark-visaged stepbrother; but, no; Ben, he knew, was a sneak, and wanted but opportunity to make him a rascal, but he lacked a very important element in his composition, and that was courage, of which article it certainly required quite an amount to run the risk of detection by entering and firing a building tenanted by nearly a hundred souls.

Then he sought for a motive; there was the property left by his father to incite his stepmother to dark and desperate deeds; and then, there was the ancient enmity between himself and Bob Grierson, augmented by Minnie Mason's preference for himself over his rival; but could these be sufficient to cause Bob to make a murderer of himself?

It was a riddle hard to read, and Hal at last gave it up, only forming the resolve to henceforth use every caution and protect himself in every way possible.

He became convalescent and was permitted to ramble about at will, and would in a few days return to his studies; several times he came face to face with Bob Grierson, and received from him such a look of hate as left little doubt that Bob wished him dead, at least.

Time slipped by, and Hal was fully recovered, as were also Denny and his two companions, all of whose hands had been badly blistered in effecting Hal's escape.

Then one morning, at the opening of the day's session, Obadiah Strong arose, and with the big flat ruler gave three resounding whacks on his desk.

This was the order for personal attention to his remarks.

"Boys," he began, "thee hast all behaved well during the past term, and thy good conduct, especially of Dennis Will-

bury, hath kept a shelter above my poor head. Vacation is close at hand, but I have a proposition to submit which may please thee. It is this: That instead of breaking up during vacation we pursue our studies in geology and natural history on board of a sloop which I find I can charter reasonably. We can sail from place to place along the river and can visit the seashore if thee feel so inclined. Hast thee anything to say?"

The boys had followed his words closely, and understood in a trice all the details of the proposition, and thoroughly captivated by the idea, there arose a chorus of stentorian yells of

"Yes—yes. Bully—bang up—just the ticket. Won't it be fun? Yes—yes—yes!"

The storm of applause showered upon the professor for having given birth to such an idea actually embarrassed him, and when they called upon him for a speech he sank back into his big armchair just able to feebly answer:

"Thou art a pack of scamps to raise such a noise. It's scandalous, and I bid thee be silent."

Silent! Yes, they were silent—in a horn; some one proposed three cheers for the "boss school of Beechwood afloat and ashore," and if they didn't quite raise the rafters of the roof, they at least made themselves heard a quarter of a mile away.

Again Obadiah bade them be silent, and the tone of his voice gave them to understand that there would be danger in disregarding the command, so they quieted down, and pretended to study hard, but study just then was an impossibility.

They eagerly discussed the new project, and among the most frequent queries was: "Hey, wonder what the institute will have to say to this?"

The boys were bidden to keep the thing quiet, but this was impossible, and within a few hours it had been heard of by Bob Grierson, whom we have for some time neglected.

It will be remembered how he disposed of Sly; his act was the vilest treachery, yet perhaps he had done no more than Sly would have done, had the case been reversed.

For a few days following this affair Bob was in a fever of apprehension, but, gaining courage, he became his old self again.

It is singular how soon conscience becomes deadened; Bob Grierson, who at first had shuddered awful qualms at the bare thought of shedding blood, now exulted in having done it; conscience he possessed no longer, and he was ready to do anything, no matter how vile or wicked, provided he felt sure of escaping detection.

"Some one to see you, Bob," said his father one day.

"Who?"

"I don't know. Go down and see," was the reply.

Bob paled at the first glimpse of his visitor, whose eyes were gleaming with a strange, vengeful fire.

It was Dick Morrough.

Finding Sly did not return to their rendezvous, Dick started along the river shore to find him, muttering angrily to himself, meanwhile, being half inclined to believe that Sly had pocketed the money and deserted him.

Such continued to be his opinion for two days, and he stood by the river bank cursing Sly and growling to himself, when he saw that which explained the mystery of Sly's non-return; at first he saw only a dark, indistinguishable mass, but as it came closer he saw that it was a human body.

Hoping to find something of value about it, he took some trouble to get it ashore, when, to his surprise, he found the eyes of his pal, wide open, and staring into his own.

The truth struck him at once, but he could not understand one thing, why Sly's body had risen to the surface so soon, it being a general belief that drowned persons will not rise for nine days.

It is hardly necessary to say that this, like many another idle belief, is sheer nonsense, one body rising in a few hours, some not in many days, and others, for aught we know, never rising at all.

After coolly thinking the matter over, Dick called to see Bob.

"Well?" said Bob, his voice trembling in spite of himself.

"Well?" was the dogged reply.

"What do you want?"

"Want? I'll tell you. Two of us 'piped' off a young fellow who tried to kill another coon, but didn't. My pal went to the fellow who tried to kill the other, and promised to keep a close mouth if he was paid for it. A bargain was struck

and they met according to agreement on the river a ways up, and——"

During this time Dick's voice had been rising in anger, and Bob, white with fear, now interrupted with

"Hush! man; for heaven's sake be quiet—do not speak so loud; you might be overheard."

"Ha—ha!" laughed Dick. "Speak loud! Did you say I mustn't? Why, what have I to be afraid of?" raising his voice again.

In an agonized voice Bob begged Dick to be silent, not to speak above a whisper.

"Well, whisper, then," said Dick. "They met and one murdered the other. The one murdered was my pal, and the other was Bob——"

"Do not mention my name. Oh, heavens! here comes some one—go—tell me where you're stopping and I'll come and see you."

"I'm at the tavern outside the village line," was the reply. "I'll expect you to-night."

That night Bob Grierson went to see Dick, and bought his silence and assistance for the future, by giving him a pair of diamond bracelets that had been his mother's.

It is sufficient to say that Bob made an arrangement with Dick to murder Hal; the sequel we know, but prior to its occurrence Dick Morrough called again on his sister, Mrs. Herrick, and from her received a goodly sum for the same purpose.

Hardly had Dick been gone when the closet door of the room opened, and Ben Larue stepped out and congratulated his mother with a sneer on his lips.

"I understand your game at last," he said ironically. "So, all said and done, the wealthy widow of old Herrick was no better than a sneak thief."

White with passion, she raised her hand, and would have struck him but for his catching hold of her and forcing her back into a seat.

It was the first time he had ever laid hands on her, and keenly did the guilty woman realize that he did so now because all respect for her as his mother had fled.

"You will do well to take me into your confidence hereafter," he sneered. "I don't dislike your scheme, by Jove, I don't, for I'm always deucedly hard up on the allowance you give me. So you're planning to get it all, are you?"

"I am, for your sake."

"Indeed! Well, I'll remember your words, and will see if you'll prove them true when you get it into your hands. I want some money."

"I haven't any for you."

"Have you any at all?"

"A little."

"Shell out, then, old woman. I've been under your thumb long enough, and will let you know that in future I am master here."

"By virtue of what?" said Mrs. Herrick sternly, her eyes flashing.

"By virtue of the power I hold over you by knowing of your attempting to poison Hal," he darted at her, fixing his rum-reddened eyes on her face. "Give me what money you've got—for I'm not over my 'hurrah' yet, and the boys are waiting for me. Shell out, I say—shell out."

More like a tigress than a human being looked the woman, as she hissed:

"Ben Larue, for your sake I have committed awful crimes, but should you cross my path I would sweep you from it as ruthlessly as I would crush a snake. You are ingratitude personified, you whelp."

"Bah!" cried Ben, his lips curling.

Words fail to describe the height to which this scornful interjection carried her rage, and after claspings her hands an instant, she sprang forward and struck Ben on his cheek.

"Ouch! The devil! You had a pin in your hand."

"I had," she replied, in a voice, oh! so fearfully calm. "See, here it is; it is generally concealed in this ring."

"Woman, what mean you?" gasped Ben in alarm. "What meaning underlies your words?"

"You will soon know."

"I do know!" howled the now thoroughly frightened wretch. "You have—poi—poi—my jaws are stiffening—you—have—poi—poisoned me."

"I have!" was the reply, in a demon-like tone, and not a muscle of her face moved as she watched the froth gathering about his lips as she saw him reeling, and ready to fall.

Prone on the floor, his limbs stiffening, his eyes glazing, his face working in bitter anguish, the woman of ice began to

melt at the sight, and she sprang to his side hastily when he gasped out:

"Mother—save me. I did not mean it."

"Here is the antidote," she cried in agitated tones. "Swallow it at once!"

"He tried to do so several times, but failed."

"I—I can—can't," he brokenly moaned.

Kind heaven! what misery that woman suffered in that minute; she would have given worlds to recall her action.

A pitcher of water was near by; pouring a swallow or two into a glass, she stirred in the antidote, and placing the glass at his lips, bade him let the fluid trickle down his throat.

He was already senseless, and neither resisted nor helped her.

When the last drop was given, the tumbler fell from her nerveless hand, and turning her face heavenward, she prayed—ay! that guilty, blood-stained creature prayed—that the life of her son might be spared.

It was hours before she was sure the antidote had worked, and then a flush colored her cheek.

Half a minute later with the antidote, and naught on earth could have saved Ben's life; and as it was, his chances had been hardly more than one in a thousand.

But he was saved, that was enough; and the woman had more thoroughly conquered herself than Ben could have done, and her purse was handed to him without a question.

"I'm going to Beechwood," said he the next day.

"Why so?"

"To see that the job is done without mistake," was the reply, and unheeding her entreaties not to go, Ben entered the little village only two days after the firing of the academy, which had been done by Dick Morrourough.

Ben returned home with the news of the ill-success attending this last attempt on Hal's life, and after a few days spent in debauch, he got sobered up, and once more set out for Beechwood.

Bob Grierson, as we have intimated, had heard a rumor about the academy boys going off in a sloop, and was hurrying off to the institute when he met Dick, and perforce accompanied him into the bushes of the swamp.

While in the midst of an angry conversation, in which Dick was demanding some ready money, the bushes parted, and Ben Larue stood before them with a sneering smile upon his lips.

"Gentlemen, I'll divvy, too."

Three more precious rascals never met than they; it can truly be said they were three of a kind.

CHAPTER IX.

AFLOAT.

Several days later the Quaker looked up from his paper aghast, then laid it down, took off his spectacles, polished them up, put them on, took up the paper again, and—yes, there could be no mistake about it, he could not be mistaken in the heading:

"A NEW IDEA.

"Commendable Enterprise.

"We learn that Professor Grierson, of the Beechwood Institute, has chartered a fast sailing vessel, and intends to fit her up so as to accommodate his large number of pupils, and then intends to pursue a course of study while afloat during the hot summer months. It is an excellent idea, containing as it does much pleasure and profitable instruction, which cannot but be more practical than any statements of the same facts in books.

"We wish them success, and hope the Institute Boat Club, under whose auspices the boat is supposed to sail, will score many victories while bounding over the white-capped waves."

Obadiah uttered no word, but flinging down the paper, arose to his feet and strode to and fro for nearly an hour.

As for the boys, the appearance of the paper and the information it contained was no sooner known than their indignation arose.

"Shameful!"

"Barefaced robbery."

"Yes, and they'll get credit for the idea, and now if we follow out our idea we will be called imitators."

"Don't let's go!" cried a dozen or more. "What say you, Hal?"

"That I never yet backed down and don't mean to begin now."

"Bravo!" cried Denny. "That's the talk."

Still more galling news was in store for them; the very sloop the Quaker had thought of chartering and which was known as the fastest belonging to Beechwood, had been secured by the institute, who, finding that no actual agreement had been made, stole a march on the academy by paying some money and putting a contract in writing.

This put a damper on the boys, for they did not want to go out in a less fast craft than the institute had, and even the Quaker, with a dismal groan and a sigh over the growing wickedness of the world, thought of abandoning the scheme.

For once Hal would hear of no such arrangement, in which he found an able second in Denny Willbury.

"Empower me to charter a sloop and I'll get one that will take the starch out of the Nancy," as the institute's sloop was named.

So said Hal in a confident tone, and he saw a hopeful smile steal across the Quaker's visage; Obadiah's spirit had been aroused, and he felt like bucking against the rival school to the bitter end, yet above all things he did not wish to be beaten.

"We are called the 'boss school of Beechwood,'" said Hal, earnestly, "and if you give me the authority I want, I'll agree to boss in this, too. What say you, sir?"

"Verily, Hal, I dislike that word 'boss.' It smacketh of roughness, and hath an ill sound, yet"—rolling his eyes toward the ceiling, and instinctively rubbing the palms of his hands—"and yet, I must admit that it hath a pleasant definition. If we could only get a better word—something like excelsior, for instance."

"Bosh!" exclaimed Hal. "Boss is the word, and implies exactly what we are. But about the sloop?"

"Art sure thee can find a faster one than the Nancy?"

"Positive."

"Go find her, then—and do it quickly."

The result of this conversation was that Hal chartered a sloop called the Fleetwing, which was to be fitted up and sent to Beechwood, on the twenty-fifth of June.

The boys were informed of the date of their intended start, and strange to say, the very next day, with a flourish of trumpets, the institute publicly announced the same day for their departure.

Hal saw through their design at once; they imagined such another fast sailer as the Nancy could not be easily found, and intended to try and disgrace the Academy at the start, by leaving far behind the vessel which represented it. As we remarked, Hal understood the scheme, and smiled in his sleeve.

The appointed day came at last, and at twelve o'clock the Fleetwing tied fast to the pier next below that at which the Nancy was lying.

Two o'clock was the intended time, but it was fully three when the Fleetwing's lines were cast loose, a movement speedily copied by the Nancy.

Once more the rival boat clubs were to meet, and the great question was who would be victor, and who vanquished.

There was a good stiff breeze blowing, and that from the most favorable quarter, which would at once bring out the sailing qualities of the two vessels.

The Nancy was the first to get under way, and went scudding away like a thing of life; some of the academy boys uttered vexed exclamations, but Hal smiled, and said to Denny in a low tone:

"Let them go. The longer the start the worse the beat. Ah, we're taking the wind now; notice how easily we slip through the water. Ain't she a beauty?"

Denny became infected with Hal's enthusiasm, and when he saw that they would surely overtake the Nancy, he flung his cap high in air, and called on the boys to give the craft three hips and a tiger.

The vast crowds on the shore that had gathered to see the boats off up to this time had been silent, but hearing the wild hurraing, joined in one grand shout of farewell to the rival schools.

Some were mounted on horseback, or were in light wagons, and these at once sped along the shore road to keep the boats in sight as long as possible and see which won the race.

On board the two crafts a deep but quiet excitement was on everybody, and not a word was spoken save by the sailing masters in giving directions that would increase their speed;

even they spoke only when absolutely necessary, and like the rest, breathlessly awaited the result.

The Nancy was doing her level best, and was holding her own a goodly stretch in advance.

The Fleetwing's master bit his lip and looked chagrined, and even angry when some one said they were being dropped.

"Dropped," he grunted. "No, we're not. We can lick that craft all hollow. Jim," to one of the crew, "just draw the main sheet in a little flatter; I don't think it catches the full strength of the wind."

No sooner was this done than the Fleetwing slipped along at a more rapid pace, and slowly but steadily the gap closed.

Inch by inch the noble craft crept toward the Nancy, whose people vainly struggled to extract even a trifle greater speed; she was doing her best and could do no more.

The sight of two boats struggling thus is one well worth seeing, and a man who would not feel his blood burning with excitement at such a time can be little better than a lump of senseless clay.

The academy boys waited until sure, and then came cries of "We're gaining—we're gaining! Bravo! Well done! We'll beat 'em yet! We're 'boss' on shore, we'll prove ourselves 'boss' afloat!"

Gain they certainly did.

Bob Grierson had started away exulting in an anticipated victory, but when he saw his anticipations proving nothing but bitter disappointment, his rage knew no bounds.

"Curse you, Hal Herrick!" he hissed. "This is some more of your work, for I heard you hired the boat. Curse you—curse you; my day will come yet, and then—" he clenched his fists and ground his teeth together.

"Not so loud—somebody else might hear," said a voice at his elbow, and starting sharply, Bob saw Dick Morrough on board. "Hist!" softly said Dick. "Make no fuss. You intended leaving me ashore, but I thought I'd go along. You must fix things for me."

"I can't."

"You must," growled Dick. "But see, by St. Peter, they're up with us—and now begin to pass us."

It was the truth.

Inch by inch the Fleetwing's nose went to the front; Hal kept the boys quiet until the lead was well assured, and then such a shout as the academy boys sent up, and such groans as the instituters smothered in their breasts.

The Fleetwing ran for two days, and then making a landing the boys went ashore and pitched their tents on a grassy slope beside a running brook.

From on board the Nancy, Bob Grierson located the camp, and when they, following the example of the others, ran in and camped, he and Dick Morrough made their way along the shore on foot.

From a clump of bushes they saw Hal and marked his tent well, and when the silence of the midnight hour was over the whole face of nature they crept forth from their concealment like venomous snakes.

They reached the door of the tent; there lay Hal exposed to their murderous intentions, and the gleaming blades were ready to drink his heart's blood.

Awake, Hal—awake! Danger hangs over you! Awake! But, ah! you slumber peacefully on while that foul fiend in human form draws near to strike.

But Hal awakened just as Dick Morrough was bending over him. When Morrough found he was foiled in his attempt on Hal's life he fled and succeeded in making his escape.

One day shortly after the above happening Denny Wilberry and Hal went gunning for birds. While Denny was a short distance from Hal he turned to look for his companion when he perceived two men stealing up behind Hal. Before he could shout a warning they had pounced on Hal and had made him a captive. Denny went to his rescue, but was himself made a prisoner, being completely knocked out and lay insensible. Their captors carried them to a rock near by, where the villains had a keg of powder, their intentions being to put an end to our hero and his pal. Their captors lit a slow match and applied it to a train of powder and then fled off into the woods. But Hal, who was working hard at his bonds, succeeded in freeing himself and dragged Denny some distance away, when the air was rent by a loud explosion. But our friends were safe.

On their way out of the woods they stumbled into a charcoal pit which was full of snakes.

CHAPTER X.

THE REGATTA.

When first Dick Morrough had entered into the scheme to destroy Hal he had been actuated solely by mercenary motives, by the desire to obtain the reward promised him by his sister, but after his repeated failures his anger had risen against the youth who so persistently refused to be killed, and he began to entertain a bitter feeling of revenge toward Hal for making him so many times run such great risk.

In other words, because Hal refused to be killed, Dick considered himself somewhat as a greatly injured person.

It was owing to this feeling, that instead of killing Hal outright, he had consented to tie him near the charge and explode it, rightly conceiving that the sight of the slow match crawling toward the powder would prove exquisitely painful mental torture.

They had got the idea from seeing Hal jump suddenly up and scatter the burning embers with his feet, they being at the time concealed behind a ledge of rock near by.

After leaving the vicinity of the quarry they hurried away far enough to be beyond the possibility of being struck by flying missiles, where they paused until they heard the report and its echoes die away; Dick thought of returning to feast his eyes on the mangled corpse of his victim, but yielded to Ben's desire to push on, that faint-hearted individual conjuring up the probabilities of some one's being attracted to the spot by the report.

When far enough away to suit even Ben, they had started a fire, and their camp it was that Hal and Denny discovered just before stumbling into the old charcoal pit.

This was disagreeable enough in itself, but was made doubly so by the fact of being tenanted by snakes.

With a low, horrified cry Hal had recoiled as his hand, stretched out to save his face, had lighted on the cold and slimy body of a snake, and it was all he could do to prevent giving a yell, just as he informed Denny of this, one of the wriggling fraternity having begun to climb up his pants leg.

Up it mounted, and wrapping its folds about Hal's thigh, raised its flat head nearly on a level with his face. Hal saw two greenish, glittering sparks of fire fixed motionless on him for a minute, and then saw them wave slowly from side to side, while the infernal forked tongue began darting in and out.

"For heaven's sake, Denny, get something and strike right in front of me," gasped Hal.

"Strike it is!" exclaimed Denny, who had been fortunate enough to find a cordwood stick; and with one flourish of his weapon downward it cut with a swishing sound, dragging the snake from his hold, and stretching him dead at their feet.

Hiss—hiss—hiss! clear and sibilant on every side, and then such a sickening sound as ensued! It was as if a thousand of the slimy bodies were twisting and working through and over each other.

"Moses!" ejaculated Denny. "There's one up under my pants!"

"Catch him and strangle him!" said Hal, quickly, but in a low, guarded tone. "Denny, these can't be poisonous snakes, so we have no great cause for fear. Back out as quietly as possible and don't make any noise to alarm them if we can help it."

"Darn you!" growled Denny between his clenched teeth as he grasped the snake about the throat and pressed it between his hand and leg. "Slash away with your tail all you want to. I'll get hold of it in a minute. By George, but you're lively. Hal, get this fellow by the tail and yank him out."

"Right," exclaimed Hal, and stooping he caught the slashing tail, gripped it firmly, then cried:

"Let go!"

"Now!" cried Denny, loosing his hold.

By a quick movement Hal jerked out the unwelcome visitor of Denny's pant's leg and sent it flying across the pit, when it dropped among a number of companions, stirring them up to motion and menacing hisses, and then as if it had sprung from some elevation or had the power of flying, a little dark form flashed through the air and struck on Hal's shoulder.

Quick as lightning a fold was around Hal's neck, and another was added ere he could raise his hands to drag away the snake, and then that small head and gleaming eyes darted up and down, from right to left, before his face.

A thrill of horror convulsed the lad's frame, and to save himself he could not keep back the shrill cry that arose to his lips.

"What's up!" cried the startled Denny.

"A snake, about my neck!" gasped Hal, catching his breath between the words. "He's choking me—and my head—is spinning—I—I—must—be—fainting."

Denny saw him tottering, and sprang to his side with his drawn and open pocket-knife in his hand; he saw the outline of the snake's neck and head, and swinging up his arm he made a desperate cut at it, and chance so directed the stroke that the small blade went through the center of the snake's neck just behind the head; the blade must have cut the spinal cord, or struck the base of the brain, for the snake's folds at once unwound and the creature dropped to earth, dead.

That shrill cry of Hal's suddenly piercing the ears of the villains, brought them to their feet in an instant, and they stood there motionless, expectant.

Then Dick Morrourh uttered an oath, but Ben Larue, white as a sheet, brokenly said:

"That was Hal Herrick's voice."

"Nonsense," growled Dick. "He's lying up yonder, torn into shreds."

"No—no, it's his voice. I'll swear to it!" cried Ben. "He's got away safe, somehow, and has been dogging us. Come away, we're no match for them with their guns."

"Let's see first what's up," growled Dick, between his teeth. "Get that barker of yours ready. Now come along."

Guided by the sounds of the scrimmage, they neared the old pit, reaching its edge just as Hal and Denny, puffing and panting, climbed its side.

Their first look was at the camp-fire.

"They have already fled!" exclaimed Hal, in a disappointed tone.

"So it seems."

"Hang the luck! If that reptile hadn't got around my neck we'd have trapped them. Let's go up to the fire."

All this was heard by the concealed desperadoes, who could only gaze blankly at each other as well as they could in the darkness.

"Didn't I tell you?" said Ben, trembling in every joint.

"Curses on him, he has more lives than a cat!" hissed Dick.

"Ha! there's a good chance for a shot as he is outlined by the fire. Come this way, so we can get away without stumbling into that confounded snake nest. Now I've got a good shot."

Crack!

A bullet went whizzing on its deadly mission, which it failed to fulfil by a mere trifle of distance, for it cut a furrow in Hal's hair.

"The fellow must be a devil incarnate," exclaimed Denny, and whipping out his revolver he fired several shots at random, then sprang into the woods side by side with his friend.

They heard a crashing sound among the bushes as the assassins fled, and pursued them long and hotly, but lost them at last, Dick being wise enough to twist and turn frequently as they ran.

Hal and Denny did not pause until forced to do so by actual distress in breathing; exhausted completely, they sank down upon a log, and were thus resting when day broke.

"Well, Denny," said Hal, in a reluctant tone, "I suppose we might as well return to camp. It was rough to have got so near and then not even get a glimpse of them."

"So it was," assented Denny; "but a longer stay in the woods here would be useless, and—"

"And you ought to have that head attended to," added Hal. "It was a brute to make you run so after having been so nearly killed on my account. How does your head feel?"

"Why, it just jumps a little, as if I had a magnified headache. But you're no brute and I'm all right."

"Do you feel able to walk back?" asked Hal, solicitously.

"Pshaw! yes. Shall we start now?"

They reached camp after a weary jaunt, and very glad was the Quaker to see his pupils back again, for he had begun to fear something had gone amiss.

Denny's wound was attended to; and then the poor fellow went to bed, to obtain much-needed rest. He slept soundly for nearly fifteen hours, and then awoke much refreshed.

He accounted for his condition by a story far from the truth, but which satisfied all who heard it. Hal had an ax to

grind when he proposed that the sloop should continue her trip.

He wanted to see if in changing from this place his unknown enemies followed him.

His proposal was favorably received, and after a pleasant cruise of about a week they ran into the bay before the town of Middleville.

The very next day the Nancy, with all the Instituturs on board, anchored within gunshot of them, acting as if the meeting were by accident instead of design.

Then followed a series of races and other sports between the two rival schools, attended with a certain amount of intellectual enjoyment.

After cruising about a while it came time to return and the rival schools came back to Beechwood.

During all this time Dick Morrourh had been on board of the Nancy, much to Bob's discomfiture.

He never let an opportunity go by to hound Bob on in his evil ways.

Dick demanded money of Bob, and the latter, afraid to refuse, again had recourse to his father's safe. He had just opened it when his father entered the office. Thoroughly desperate, Bob struck Grierson a fearful blow on the head, leaving him, as he thought, dead upon the floor. One of the boys had seen the act, however, and raised the alarm, and immediately the entire town was aroused and in chase of Bob.

Bob Grierson managed to escape from the crowd pursuing him, and after lying in hiding for a few days, shipped on board of a vessel bound for South America, and finally reached Rio de Janeiro.

CHAPTER XI.

SAVED AGAIN.

In the excitement, Hal went down to the river, thinking Bob might try to escape by boat.

He was out on the dock, all unsuspecting of danger, when Ben Larue crept up behind him, stabbed him, and pushed him into the water.

Bob struck the water and sank immediately.

He still kept his sense, and remembered first thing what to do.

That was to clutch the wound tightly and prevent the loss of much blood, and secondly to hold his breath while under water; to think, with him, was to act, and though his enemies knew it not, he arose to the surface but a few feet away, and had still strength enough left to keep himself afloat.

He dared not call for help at that minute, and despite his efforts was carried away by an eddy that set off from the shore, and though he heard Denny's calls and answered them, the replies had been too weak to be heard; when satisfied of this, he could not help shuddering, for alone on the river, with none to stretch forth a helping hand, he must inevitably drown!

Had he not lost so much blood, and been in his usual trim, he would have thought nothing of swimming ashore, but a single effort now showed him how hopeless a task it was in the present instance.

Weaker and weaker he became, his limbs becoming stiff and chilled, and his heart sickening as each minute dragged what was to him a weary length.

Earnestly, eagerly he endeavored to pierce the gloom and catch a sight of some vessel which he might hail; then he sought the aid of his ears, thinking, perhaps, he might hear the noise of a vessel though the darkness hid her from view; but his ears learned nothing more than his eyes, and with crushing force the truth was made plain to him, that naught but heaven's merciful hand could avert the fate his fiendish step-brother had designed for him.

Oh, how hard he struggled against the terrible feeling of weakness that was rapidly growing on him! It was life or death now!

He felt that he could not much longer keep himself afloat, and an agonized cry burst from his lips as at length his limbs refused to move, and he began to slowly sink into a watery grave.

"Help—help! oh, mercy! is no one near to help me?" he cried aloud.

Slowly but with deadly certainty his efforts to keep himself afloat grew weaker, and he sank deeper.

Once more he uttered a despairing cry, and then unclasping

the hand which had so far partially checked the flow of blood he struck out with frenzied movements.

He sank.

Choking, gasping, he battled his way to the surface again, and struggled wildly to keep afloat; but in vain, he sank again.

Exhausted, faint, he felt like giving up the battle, but a something within sustained him, and calling every atom of strength and will to his aid, he fought and conquered, for he reached the surface again; he must have quickly sunk for the third and last time had not the hand of fate again become visible in his behalf.

As he arose his outstretched hand struck something floating; it proved to be the hatch of a vessel of sufficient size to sustain him; once more his indomitable will summoned up his waning strength, and by one superhuman effort he managed to reach the top of the floating hatch, on which he sank with reeling brain.

He felt the warm blood gushing from the now unconfined hole, and with the last remaining spark of intelligence gripped the wound with his fingers, and the world slipped from his grasp, and then the hatch and its burden were carried onward by the tide.

Was that burden living or dead?

Such was the question asked of it as the body lay on the deck of a sea-going vessel, which, having been frightened up the river, was going down to the sea, when, by the early morning light, the hatch and its burden had been discovered, and Hal had been brought on board.

He had been unconscious for hours, and so great was the quantity of strength lost that he was as ghastly as a corpse; and such for some minutes the ship's doctor took him to be. But an examination proved that life still remained, so to work they went with a will, and though they could not bring him back to consciousness they worked up and established a free circulation and respiration.

Hal's clasping the wound so closely had saved his life, for it checked the blood and caused the little that squeezed out to coagulate and form a barrier to the rest, that, but for that restriction would have spurted out like a fountain.

"We'll put him ashore in the city," said the captain, as he gazed upon the unconscious lad. "He's a fine-looking fellow, hey, Jenkins?"

"Quite right, sir," was the obsequious reply of the first officer. "But about putting him ashore at the city. I believe we have no need of provisions?"

"No, sir."

"Then if this wind holds out we shall reach the city in time for the ebb tide. If we stop we will lose the tide to cross the lower bar."

"In that case we'll send him on board one of the pilot boats outside and let them bring him back," said the captain.

It proved as the first officer had predicted, and for them to have stopped even half an hour would have been equivalent to losing the much valued tide, so they kept sail spread full and stood down the harbor toward the sea.

The bar was crossed in time, and the captain thought of his passenger, and looked around in quest of a pilot boat; as fate willed, none were to be seen, and the captain was in a quandary, as he did not wish to carry away the lad he had rescued, and yet did not wish to lose even an hour of such weather.

The doctor's opinion settled the matter.

"I firmly believe it would finish the work so ably commenced by some dastard to move him in his present condition," the doctor had said.

"That settles it, then. Jenkins, have the men haul everything taut and let her slide through the water for all she is worth, for this weather is too fine to bless Jack Tar long."

"Aye, aye, sir."

They had been at sea nearly a day before Hal recovered from a stupor so long continued as to frighten the doctor, who had never witnessed a similar case.

A sad smile crossed his face when they told him he was far out at sea, and he wearily said:

"It may be as well so, and perhaps it is best that I never return more."

"Why so?" inquired the doctor.

Hal's only reply was a smile, that as much as said, "that you would be a friend I am sure, but it is best that this remain a secret safely locked within my own breast," and the doctor had tact enough not to allude to the subject again.

As the captain had said, the weather they had started with was too fine to bless Jack Tar any length of time, and in less than a week they plunged into a number of remarkably fierce

storms for the latitude and season of the year, and the first one before which they had to run took them several hundred miles out of their course.

After being buffeted around unmercifully, they reached the coast of Brazil, and the captain determined to make Rio de Janeiro for the purpose of procuring fresh supplies.

By this time Hal was on his pins again, though by no means his former self; not wishing to be a burden on the kind-hearted captain, he had taken a berth made for him as a sort of supercargo or clerk.

They were to remain at Rio a week, and after having seen the purchases come on board Hal was free to spend the remainder of the time as he chose, which time he determined to employ in seeing the sights of the place.

He had heard much of the beauty of an old cathedral that lay in ruins some four or five miles beyond the city.

To visit this he started early one morning, with a stick across his shoulder supporting a small bundle, containing his lunch, and a tin cup to drink from.

He reached the place about ten o'clock, and found a pile of majestic ruins; the building had been allowed to fall by time's unsparing fingers, and beautiful marble columns and pilasters lay heaped high in broken pieces.

"It was wild, it was desolate and though almost within hearing of the hum of the busy city, he saw no other living being there but himself, nor did he for several hours, when, however, on rounding a corner of a portion of wall that still stood erect, he came face to face with—Bob Grierson.

Completely dumfounded at the unexpected rencounter, neither was able to speak a word for several minutes; then Bob, whose fears came rushing back in a mighty torrent, gasped out:

"Hal Herrick—on my trail?"

"Yes," was the stern reply.

"Then die!" hissed Bob, "for you will never capture me alive."

A polished barrel glinted in the sun, then—crack!

CHAPTER XII.

BOB'S TERRIBLE DEATH.

Crack!

The would-be murderer's bullet passed through Hal's hat, and ploughed a hole in his hair; half an inch lower and it must have penetrated his brain.

Contrary to his usual custom, Hal had on this occasion brought his revolver with him, and when Bob fired on him a second time, he drew it in self-defense.

"Fool!" cried Hal. "After what has happened would you try to commit murder again?"

"Aye, curse you, you at any rate," hissed the maddened Bob. "Once I shuddered at murder, but I'm desperate now, and if ever I am hung it will be for an old sheep and not for a lamb. Take that, curse you—ha—ha!—that shot told!"

So it had. It had buried itself in Hal's left shoulder.

"You bring it on yourself," said Hal sternly. "Drop that pistol!"

As he spoke he took a quick aim and pulled the trigger.

Crack!

Simultaneously with the sharp, whip-like report came a cry of pain and the ringing of metal against stone.

Hal's shot had struck where he intended, in Bob's right hand, from which the revolver dropped as if it were red-hot; snatching out the companion of the fallen weapon, Bob savagely grasped it in his left hand, quickly fired two shots, and then turning in his tracks, fled like a deer.

By simply wounding him Hal had placed him hors de combat.

With this unpleasant truth before his eyes, Bob thought it best to trust to his legs, and right fleet ones they were, too, all his bravado and courage having oozed away, leaving him to be spurred on by the wildest agonies of fear.

After him sped Hal, but in vain was the chase, Bob being far stronger and in much better condition than his pursuer; Bob's face was a study as the different expressions chased each other across it; now it was deathly white with awful terror, again it was doggedly desperate, and again it was the picture of wildest fury.

In one of his desperate moods he turned sharply as he fled and mounted a sort of terrace formed by the fallen walls; great heaps of debris lay scattered around, large blocks of marble, some still square as the chisel had cut them, others

now round by the force of time; one of the latter lay quite near the edge, and springing to it with a fiendish cry of joy, Bob seized it with both hands, disregarding the pain from the bleeding wound.

Hal was coming on a run, would pass at the foot of the wall.

Nearer he came, nearer, and then with a low cry of devilish triumph, Bob started the block of marble, and without waiting to see the effect of it, he renewed his flight.

Bob's cry had been heard by Hal, who glanced upward in time to see and avoid the falling mass of marble; with an involuntary shudder at this new evidence of Bob's utter wickedness and desperation, Hal sprang on in pursuit, but was soon distanced completely, nor did he catch sight of Bob again though he circled the ruins several times.

While he stood there uncertain what to do, he saw some sailors approaching from the direction of the city, who, on being questioned, admitted having seen a young fellow such as Hal described, and going toward the city.

This was enough, and off Hal started at a swinging pace, determined to cover the young murderer at all hazards; he had another motive in view beside that of delivering Bob to the law; it was to learn if he had been a party to the villainy of which he had been a victim.

He reached the city, having been busily engaged on the way in thinking up the most probable places in which to seek for Bob; then he remembered that a vessel had put into Rio several days before they had done so, which had left the same port as they had several days later. Could he belong on board of her?

Hal thought it worthy of investigation at any rate, and determined to pay the vessel a visit after having his wound dressed.

It was now the hour of sundown when he started on his quest.

Walking along the bulkhead he shuddered as he came upon a scene that was fearful to behold. There lay a shark, floundering about in his dying agonies, while hanging about his jaws were shreds and patches of the clothing of some poor fellow who had fallen a victim to his ferocity.

The shark's killing the man had made him a mark for the incensed sailors, and the man-eater forfeited his life for a meal.

"How fearful," thought Hal. "I should never want to witness such a thing."

Ah, he little dreamed then of the terrible scene he was so soon to dumbly look upon, unable to raise a finger to prevent, while a human life was destroyed.

He reached the vessel he had set out to visit and boarded her. He asked for Bob Grierson, but was answered that no such person was on board. He turned away, but paused ere he reached the gangway. Might not Bob be traveling under an assumed name?

He determined to stay on board and watch and wait.

Half an hour passed, and then from his half-concealed position he saw a head emerging above the cabin stairway, saw it turned slowly as if the owner were cautiously scanning the deck in search of enemies. Evidently nothing alarming was seen, for the head now appeared fully, then the shoulders followed, and presently the individual stood erect on the deck.

Although Hal saw only the person's back, he felt sure it was Bob, more so because he could see the white cloth about his neck to form a sling for his wounded hand. Presently the person turned about, and any lingering doubt as to his identity was dispelled.

The young villain commenced nervously pacing to and fro on the quarterdeck, occasionally darting suspicious glances toward the dock, but failing to see the figure in the lee of the mainmast.

Hal waited until he saw the captain on the stairway, and then advanced as Bob's back was toward him. When the villain turned it was to find Hal's face within three feet of his own.

A hoarse cry of alarm fell from his lips, and with blanching face he recoiled a step or two, then stood trembling in guilty despair.

"Bob Grierson," said Hal, solemnly, "guilty and miserable youth, murderer of your father, I demand you now to surrender."

Bob uttered a heartrending groan, and staggered against the rail for support.

"What!" exclaimed the captain. "A murderer! Is this the chap there was so much talk about just the week we sailed?"

"It is," said Hal, and then advanced with outstretched hand,

intending to take hold of Bob. But the latter's feelings changed like lightning, the paleness of fear giving place to the redness of awful despair.

"No—no!" he shrieked. "You shall never hang me. Keep off—keep off, I say, or I will murder you."

As he spoke he snatched out a revolver and attempted to use it with his left hand. Quick as thought Hal darted upon him and wrenched the weapon from his hand.

"Surrender peaceably. It will be the best for you."

"Surrender and be hung!" howled Bob. "Never—never! Curses on you, Hal Herrick, you have always stood in my way, and I hate you—I hate you!"

In his rage he forgot his wound, and dragging his hand from the sling, he endeavored to clutch Hal by the throat, and failing in this, caught him about the waist, and with the fire of a demon in face and eyes, tried to throw him overboard.

Fierce and terrible was the struggle, though its duration was not more than a minute or two. Failing in this last attempt, Bob exerted all his strength, and drawing Hal near with a bear-like hug, drew back his lips as a snarling tiger might, and essayed to plant his teeth in Hal's throat, and he would have succeeded, too, but for a violent blow in the face and Hal's breaking away from his grasp by a powerful shove that sent him tottering toward the rail.

At one point a few feet of the rail was missing, having been carried away in the storm, and toward this Bob was reeling.

Hal saw it, a cry of warning leaped to his lips, but too late—for the first note had not been sounded when Bob fell.

With a low exclamation of horror, Hal sprang to the vessel's side, slipping off his coat ready to plunge in and save him, but a single glance showed him how little Bob could be helped by a human hand.

He struck the water, disappeared, came up to the surface again, and uttered shriek after shriek of mortal terror, for he saw what they also did that three large sharks were swiftly approaching.

Bob shrieked, cursed, prayed, threshed madly about, struck at them frantically with his clenched fist, made horrible grimaces that made him look more the demon than ever and then, despite all, came the terrible end; a horrible shriek, and then those on deck saw a body without legs, they having been snapped clean off at a single bite; another shriek—the last dying wail of despair—the body was severed in twain and dragged beneath the surface.

Overcome by the sight, Hal reeled where he stood, and groped blindly around for some support; the next minute he uttered a cry for help as he felt himself falling from the hole Bob had staggered through.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAST AWAY.

As Hal, horror-stricken at Bob Grierson's awful fate, reeled into that break in the rail and felt himself falling, he uttered a cry for help.

For an instant it seemed as if the fearful scene of a few minutes before was to be repeated, and had he fallen no power could have saved him from the rapacious creatures swimming in the water below.

As he uttered that cry for help, his danger cleared his brain and vision, and seeing the end of the rail he made a desperate clutch at and caught it by one hand; his feet had slipped and only the grasp of this one hand stood between him and eternity. His fate would have been sealed but for the prompt aid rendered by the captain and several of the crew, who caught hold of his wrists and dragged him up from his perilous position, thus disappointing the gaunt and hungry-looking man-eaters with waiting jaws, who were casting ravenous glances upward.

He was taken to the cabin and given a glass of wine, which quite restored him. In reply to the inquiries of the captain, Hal gave him a brief outline of the truth, although suppressing his own name and keeping back his own near loss of life.

Then he started to return to his own vessel.

"Fearful indeed was his punishment," muttered Hal, with a shudder. "Hanging would be merciful to being hurried into eternity in that way. Great heavens, how fearful!"

Aye, Bob Grierson had indeed expiated his crimes in a dreadful way, and to his dying day Hal Herrick will never forget that fearful scene.

Aboard his own vessel he remained closely during the time of their stay at Rio. He was engaged deeply in thought for a long while, and over and over again he asked himself the question:

"Should he write to Denny and tell him he was still alive?"

His temper boiled when he thought of the foul means used by Ben and his mother to gain possession of his father's wealth, but to him there was one thing dearer than the money—the repute of the name of Herrick. If he went, he could oust them at any minute, but more than likely to do so would bring out the story of the murderous attempts on his life, and thus to his father's memory would attach the reputation of having been married to a she-devil. Still Hal could not stomach the thought of allowing those who had been so treacherous to enjoy what belonged to him.

On the spur of the moment he decided to let things remain as they were, and instead of writing to Denny wrote to Bob's uncle a full account of his recognition and death, and signed himself Jack Tar.

This was mailed on the day they left Rio, as fine and fair a day as craft e'er sailed on.

They were bound for China, and would have to double the cape. This, however, did not trouble so good a sailor as the captain, and giving the dreaded cape plenty of sea-room, they passed without even encountering a squall.

It sometimes seems at sea that there must be about equal proportions of good and bad weather, for never is a long spell of fine weather found that it is not followed by a spell of bad, as foul as the first was fair.

So it proved in this case, and hardly had they begun to breast the waves of the Pacific than they encountered the heavy weather. It was either blowing great guns, or else so foggy that it was impossible for the lookout to see ten feet ahead.

Then it seemed to partially clear up, but lasted so only two days, when it became thick again, much to the disgust of the captain, whose face now began to wear an anxious look.

"Is there any danger, captain?" asked Hal one day.

"Yes, it's risky business with us now, for we must be near the Archipelago, though I couldn't swear to it, as we've been running on dead reckoning nearly two weeks now."

"But we may be well to the windward of them," suggested Hal.

At eight bells, just as dinner was being served up, the second officer hastily entered the cabin.

"It's coming, sir," he exclaimed.

"What's coming?" growled the captain, more to himself than his officer, for he well knew what was referred to.

"The storm is about to break; it's nearly down on us now, and it promises to be the worst I ever experienced."

"Up with you, Jenkins; up on deck with you, and see to it that everything is made snug and taut. I'll be there in half a second. Steward, my heavy pea-jacket and tarpaulin."

The steward having produced these, and helping the captain on with them, the latter snatched up a barometer and hurried on deck.

All desire for food had deserted Hal, and after vainly trying to eat he, too, donned a pea-jacket and hurried upon deck. Far away in the eastern board was a bank of densely black clouds approaching them with race-horse speed, and right beneath and keeping pace with them Hal could see immense masses of water piled mountain high, and crested with curling foam.

It struck them at last, and though they were expecting it they were appalled at the force of the blow.

One instant a great mass of water was seen suspended high in air, a dozen feet behind the quarter, on which it broke the next, and swept the deck clean to the catheads, tearing away water barrels from their fastenings, wrecking one of the boats, and sweeping the captain from the quarter into the waist, where the water lay piled three or four feet deep. Beneath the fearful load of water the gallant vessel settled down almost to her scuppers, and for the space of half a minute it seemed as if she must inevitably founder; and had another wave broke as had the first, nothing could have prevented such a catastrophe.

As it was, the water rushed through the scuppers furiously, but they being too small to allow the escape of such a volume, it tore itself a passage through the gunwale.

Crash!

The snapping of the timbers drew Hal's attention in that direction, and when the seething mass of water in the waist rushed toward the vent it had found, Hal saw two human beings struggling in its embrace.

One of them was the captain, the other a poor sailor who had been wrenched loose from the life-line which he had caught hold of as the wave broke on them.

With a chill at his heart, Hal watched the fleeting scene, and above the roar of the tempest heard the despairing cries of the doomed men as they were resistlessly hurried to a watery grave by the cruel waves.

Nothing more could be done, and each man, with bated breath, hung on for dear life while the giant rollers tossed the ship hither and thither like a chip; shock after shock ran from stem to stern as the solid masses of water struck her; she trembled, every timber groaned, and Hal could not help likening them to those of a dying human soul.

Crash! Snap! Crash!

The foremast, which had been bending like a reed, broke short off and tumbled to larboard.

"Clear away the wreck!"

This was the trumpet command shrieked out by the first officer, now the only commander the ship had.

The men paused. To let go their hold was almost certain death, yet each and all knew that unless the wrecked mast was cleared away it would sooner or later cause them to founder and go to the bottom like a shot.

"Clear away the wreck! Great heavens, boys, waste no time; it is now necessary to act, and act promptly, at that. To your axes; away with it."

Thus spoken to, the brave tars seized their axes and hatchets and worked with a will. Rope after rope of the maze was severed, until at last a few that remained were snapped asunder and the wreck disappeared swiftly.

A heavy mist was arising, making vision almost as impossible as at night, and they were hard on before there rose the cry of

"Breakers ahead!"

It was fearful news at that juncture, and not a face but blanched, and each man hung on tightly as he waited for the inevitable shock.

Cr-r-r-ash!

They struck heavily, and the remaining masts snapped like pipe stems; then, contrary to expectation, the vessel rose on the summit of a wave, and was carried clear over the coral reef they must have struck on, and was off again before the tempest.

Fifteen minutes passed—fifteen minutes of most agonizing suspense.

"Hal," shouted Jenkins, "the game will soon be played and death will play the trump card."

"Courage!" Hal cried back. "We may yet be saved."

A sad smile crossed the officer's face as he answered:

"The case is hopeless. Every man must now act for himself. A hole has been stove in the bottom the hold is filling, and we are rapidly settling. Heaven have mercy on—"

It was the last sentence the poor fellow ever uttered, for simultaneously with a staggering crash, another monster wave broke over the quarter, and swept him away.

The vessel's progress was done, but she lay thumping on a sandy beach, knocking herself to pieces with savage fury. Hal determined to be cool and keep cool, but, though he found himself on the shore bruised and half-drowned, he never knew how he got there.

The wilder the storm the sooner it wears itself out. So it proved in this instance, and the sun rose in a cloudless sky the next morning, displaying more clearly to Hal's vision the broken mass of wood and iron, and the bodies of those who, but a few short hours before, had been full of health and strength; among them was the body of Jenkins, and beside it Hal uttered a prayer before consigning it to a grave in the sand.

CHAPTER XIV.

BLOOD FOR GOLD.

After the crowd had separated and crossed the river in pursuit of Bob Grierson, Dick Morrough and Ben Larue slipped stealthily away and returned to the low tavern by a roundabout course; they did not go to bed, though the hour was so late, but waited up with anxiously beating hearts to hear the latest news in regard to Bob, whose capture they feared would be followed by his giving them and their villainous schemes away.

For three days the precious pair of rascals remained at the tavern waiting for news of Bob's capture, which not

having occurred at the expiration of that time, they concluded would not take place, the pursuit being less sharp when it was hinted about that Professor Grierson would recover.

They then posted off for the Herrick mansion, Ben having received another letter from his mother in which she stated that such a course would now be perfectly safe, no suspicion being now attached to him.

"Well, old gal, it's done," was Ben's salutation, as he leaped through the window his mother had opened for him after his giving a peculiar rap on it.

"So I've heard you say before," was the cool reply. "You may be mistaken again."

"Not this time," was the reply, with a harsh laugh. "I attended to the business myself on the present occasion, and this knife"—holding up the weapon—"see it—there still remain on it spots of his blood. Well, this knife was driven into him by myself, and I tumbled him into the water to make a clean job of it."

"Nevertheless, I expect to see him alive again," said the she-demon.

"No, sis, you are wrong," said another voice, that of Dick Morrough, as he entered the room in the same manner as Bob had. "Wrong this time, I'll swear, sis, because I saw the thing with my own eyes. This lad of yours is a worthy scion of so illustrious a villain as Jack Larue. He does both of you credit."

Mrs. Herrick's brow contracted and her face became black as a thundercloud.

"Hoity—toity," exclaimed Dick. "Come, now, we may as well understand each other first as last. You married a man who has left lots of tin behind him, to secure which for yourself you plot a murder; that murder is committed by your son, with my advice and assistance. I ran my share of the risk and I demand a fair and square divvy of the proceeds."

"What do you consider a fair and square divvy?" asked the woman, in whose eyes a smoldering, dangerous fire might have been seen.

"Seeing as how there are three of us in the job, I think each should have a third; and one-third is what I claim as my share."

"You'll never get it," hissed the woman.

"Won't, hey?" he sneered. "Don't forget, sis, that one word of mine would put a rope around your own fair neck, as well as that of your rascally son."

"And in that case your own precious neck, too."

"Ah, you think so? If driven to make a clean blow-out of this affair, I might save my own life by turning State's evidence. How is that?"

Involuntarily the raging woman clutched at the bosom of her dress, and grasped the weapon concealed there. But, with a crafty look overspreading her face, she did not draw it, and by an effort smothered her wrath.

"You say you will be frank with me. Let me say I will be the same with you. It will be months before I can get possession of the property, and even if I could to-morrow, I would not give away one-third of that which I have paid so dearly to obtain. No, that is settled, but pay you well, I will. One thousand, ay, even two thousand dollars, you shall have, and within two days, at that, if you will leave this place never to return. Unless you do you will never get a cent, and, Dick, you know me well enough, as you say, to know that I never go back on my word."

"I won't take it," he said abruptly.

"How much will you take?"

"Ten thousand, and not a cent less," growled Dick. "And not that little unless I get it inside of three days."

"Impossible!"

"Then here I stay until you get possession of the property," and settling himself in a dogged way, Dick took out a short and dirty-looking pipe, lighted the tobacco in it, and commenced puffing away in the most leisurely manner.

"Stop smoking in here!" exclaimed Mrs. Herrick. "The vile smoke from your pipe will ruin these lace curtains."

"I don't know as I care very much, seeing as how I've decided to keep this room for my own use," was the cool reply.

The determined air and dogged manner in which Dick spoke warned the woman to be on her guard, and Ben said in a whisper:

"Be careful how you talk to him. He's gettin' ugly."

"Let him," she hissed below her breath. "I can be ugly, too. He may beard the lion in his den, but may go out headless."

Ben understood the dark allusion, and exchanged significant glances with his mother.

"Come—come," said the younger villain, "what's the use of all this growling? Let's all go to bed, and see if we won't be in better humor in the morning. Come along, and I'll show you your room."

"Are you a-speakin' to me?" inquired Dick Morrough.

"Yes."

"Well," he said, taking the pipe from his mouth, "I'm Uncle Dick," and replacing the pipe began puffing vigorously again.

Ben scowled, and bestowed on him a treacherous look of hatred; but smoothing his brow, he said jocosely:

"Well, Uncle Dick be it, then. So come along, Uncle Dick."

"I'll see you in the morning again and settle with you," said Mrs. Herrick.

"Was you a-speakin' to me?"

"I was."

Again he repeated the panorama of removing and replacing the pipe.

"Well, I'm Brother Dick."

It was a hard pill for the woman to swallow, but then there was no help for it, and she thus addressed him, on which he arose, his face covered with a sneering expression:

"I thought as how I'd fetch you around, and seeing as how you have made yourself so agreeable, I've concluded to waive the right to this room and occupy another. Lead on, nephew, and see if sleep'll put us in better humor."

Half an hour later mother and son were closeted together in earnest consultation.

"He must be got rid of!" hissed the woman. "There's no safety for us while he lives."

"It shall be done. Leave it to me," and finishing the conversation with this remark, Ben went off to bed in reality.

The next day he approached Dick Morrough with a treacherous smile on his face.

"Like hunting, Uncle Dick?"

"If there's any game. Any around here?"

"First-rate gunning! Like to go?"

"Start to-morrow morning before daybreak?"

"Suits me."

So the following morning, equipped with game-bags and guns, they left the house, before any one was stirring, and Ben piloted the way to a wood several miles away. It was a wild, rough spot, incapable of cultivation.

Straight into the depths Ben led the way, but on arriving at a gully, he paused, apparently to rest and allow Dick to reach his side.

"By Jove!" he suddenly exclaimed, "there's a shot for you. I saw a coon sneaking along the side of the gully."

"Is that so?" With this exclamation Dick Morrough sprang to the edge of the gully and peered into its depths. A devilish look of exultation crossed Ben's face as he saw his uncle's back toward him. Up came the gun, loaded with large shot, on purpose; the assassin took careful aim and pulled the trigger.

Dick Morrough uttered not even a moan, but with the blood streaming from half a dozen places in his head, fell headlong to the bottom of the gully; with a shrill laugh of triumph Ben bounded to the spot and flung down rock after rock, until the body was buried from sight.

CHAPTER XV.

AMONG CANNIBALS.

Alone with the dead!

This was Hal Herrick's situation that morning when he buried the body of Jenkins, the first officer of the gallant but ill-fated vessel.

At first he had intended interring all the dead bodies that strewed the beach, but the single effort necessary to give the officer Christian burial showed him conclusively that he lacked the strength necessary to perform so great a task.

Being hungry, he picked up various edibles that had been washed ashore, and with them appeased his hunger; several beakers of water had also come ashore, and he had within his reach the means of supporting life for months, even if he never left the beach in search of anything else, or the island had proved devoid of vegetation.

He did not leave the beach for two days, but at the expiration of that time was forced to by the horrible effluvia arising from the uncovered bodies, upon which the hot tropical sun was pouring down its fervid rays.

With a bundle of food sufficient for several days, and a quantity of water proportioned to the same, Hal started into the interior of the island to explore it; he intended to find fruits and vegetables, if he could, and then stock a raft which he should try to build, and then trust himself to the mercy of the waves.

But as will be speedily seen, his plan was to go for nought.

Half a day's journey was sufficient to take him to the highest elevation of the island, whose compass he found much smaller than he had expected.

While examining the shores of the island his gaze was arrested by something white.

"Can it be a gull I see?" he murmured. "Or is it a sail? If so, it must be a very small one."

He had the ship's glass with him, which had come ashore attached to its rack; opening this, he examined the object long and attentively.

"I can hardly be mistaken. It is a ship's long boat with a sail stepped in it; and those certainly must be figures of men moving along the beach."

The longer he looked the clearer things became, and at last he had no doubt that it was a long boat, as he said, and that the tiny specks were men. But what kind of men?

They must be white men, else why a long boat with a sail?

Back from the shore, as near as he could judge, at a distance of half a mile from it, was a grove of trees; turning his glass on these, he was satisfied he could see rude huts in the edge of the grove.

If so, they must belong to the islanders, and they might be the much-dreaded cannibals.

What should he do?

Might not the long boat belong to some unfortunate ship-wrecked party who had fallen into their clutches!

Like lightning this thought flashed upon him; this struck him as the most reasonable solution of the matter. But having arrived at this conclusion, again arose the question what course he should pursue.

"I'll go there," he decided at last. "If I remain on the island at all, it is only a question of time in regard to my discovery. There is a good boat, and by being cautious I may be able to get it in my possession, besides which I may serve to save some poor fellow from an untimely end."

His soliloquy ended, he started away at a good round pace, a pace too rapid for the climate, and ere long he learned this fact and moderated it; still, it was all downhill now, and he was not half the time in descending that he had been in ascending.

It was an hour or two past mid-day when he entered the grove at the other edge of which he had seen the cluster of huts.

He now moved more cautiously, and wise it was that he did so, for even with the care exercised he came so suddenly upon the huts that he missed discovery by a hair's breadth; withdrawing quickly into the thicket from which he had emerged, he began to skirt the settlement, and had gone nearly halfway around it when he was brought to a halt by a ghastly spectacle that robbed him of the slight hope that the island was not inhabited by cannibals.

There, in a little open space, lay a pile of human bones; skulls with fragments of scalp and hair attached, thigh bones with the inedible muscles alone remaining; ribs with strips of burned flesh clinging to them, and here and there a horny hand which had been thrown away in lieu of some tid-bit.

"Kind heaven!" gasped Hal, as he reeled back, clasping his hand over his eyes to shut out the ghastly sight, and weak as a cat, he would have fallen but for the friendly support of a tree.

But Hal knew he had work before him, and knowing it, conquered his weakness and proceeded on his tour of the home of the fiends who ate human flesh; now and then he would part some brush and peer among the huts, and as he did this for the last time a sight met his gaze that froze the blood in his veins.

There, bound hand and foot, a noble-looking man lay on the ground, while near by a group of dusky savages were

fanning into a brighter glow the embers on which to roast him alive.

Hal caught his breath and clutched his heart as if fearful that its hard beating would be heard by the savage horde.

It was agonizing for him to watch the preparations they were making. He counted them and found they numbered twenty odd men, besides women and children. Nowhere could he discover any more captives, and he made up his mind that he was the only one left, though that there had been more, the ghastly pile of freshly picked bones attested.

He looked at their weapons, and saw that they were armed only with heavy clubs, at which he fell to calculating the chances with a brace of revolvers in his possession. He could see no hope—it would be madness to think of going to meet them single-handed, though he had an arsenal at his back.

Still he could not look on quiescent while a human being and a Christian was being robbed of life in such a dreadful manner, and when they lifted the victim to plunge him into the fire he could stand it no longer, but springing to his feet, rushed out with a yell, and, taking a flying aim, stretched the seeming leader dead on the ground.

At the report the savages dropped their victim and scattered.

This was what Hal wanted.

With a low cry of encouragement to the bound man, he bounded to his side, and with his ready sheath knife cut his bonds, helped him up, clapped a revolver in his hand, and cried:

"Run for the boat."

Stupefied by the sudden turn in affairs, the captive remained motionless until Hal had grasped him by the shoulder and begun to fiercely shove him along.

Then burst on the air a wild, savage yell that at this day rings in Hal's ears, and then the horde of cannibals, with their fearful knotted bludgeons, rushed upon and surrounded them.

"Heaven help us," prayed Hal.

Then, facing them like a tiger, he gritted his teeth, and, knife in one hand, revolver in the other, awaited the onslaught.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOME AGAIN.

The fiendish yell of the savages would have daunted a less stout heart than Hal's; but he had gone through so much that he had become hardened to fear, and sights that would have stricken most people with terror only caused him to grit his teeth with his fierce determination.

So it was when with horrid yells the cannibals rushed upon him and the captive he had wrested from their clutches. He aimed his revolver and fired, and one man-eater fell to the ground with a bullet in his brain.

Hal had hoped that this would prove a salutary lesson and would make them pause, but instead it only seemed to anger them more, and with the most fearful of shrieks, they dashed forward furiously, swinging about their heavy knotted clubs.

The recent prisoner groaned.

"Courage," cried Hal, between his closed teeth. "We'll whip the devils yet. Don't moan so, sir, you're almost in safety now."

"Tis not on my own account," was the hurried reply. "Heaven knows I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your trying to save me, but heaven alone knows how bitterly I regret it, for it is sure death to you."

"Hush," said Hal. "Say no more. We can and must escape safely. Use your revolver—follow my movements—see, the fiends come—fire after me."

Crack!

The leaden missile that was set free as the report arose went hurtling straight to the heart of a savage who had apparently taken the place of his fallen leader.

Crack!

The captive's revolver spoke this sharp note, for whose effects Hal watched in vain, the bullet having flown wide of the mark.

"Be careful," he warned in a low voice. "Don't waste any shots."

"I'll try not," was the reply in a lack-of-hope voice. "My

arms, though, are still stiff, and I cannot depend on them." Now all seemed lost, and even Hal could not help a sinking of the heart, now a wish that Denny Willbury were there. "With Denny, and a brace of revolvers in his hands, I'd fight an army of these devils," he thought.

Up to this time Hal had merely defended himself, saving as many shots as possible for the final struggle.

Had the rescued man only had the free use of his limbs when first released they could have escaped safely. Hal had played a waiting game so far until circulation was restored.

"Are you limbered out yet?" he asked sharply, when he could no longer conceal the fact that another minute's delay was equivalent to a crushed skull.

"Yes, nearly so."

"Then you take the fellow with a squint and I'll put a bullet into the fellow with a slit nose. As soon as you fire run like a deer for the boat. Now!"

Crack!

Crack!

The two reports blended almost as one, and two cannibals fell dead in their tracks. The sudden onslaught partially dismayed the others, and those who had stood near the shot men fell back, leaving a breach. This Hal saw at a glance, and grasping the captive by the shoulder, he started swiftly through the opening and away toward the boat. For one minute the cannibals were too stupefied to move, and then suddenly recovering, they started swiftly in pursuit.

Wild and furious did the cannibals become as they saw their prey slipping through their fingers, and without a moment's hesitation they rushed into the water, intending to lay hands on the boat and drag her ashore. The water was fairly alive with them, and the boat as yet having no headway, they began to draw dangerously close.

"Pepper 'em," cried Hal. "Now's your time."

Crack!

Another savage wilted from sight, and then as the revolver cracked again, a shout of joy burst from Hal's lips, and with a quick movement he sheeted home the sail; there was a light breeze blowing off shore, and filling the sail, it forced the boat along through the water.

Five minutes more and safety was no longer doubtful.

"Heaven's name be praised," murmured the rescued man.

"Amen!" said Hal solemnly. "You, ay, I, also, have much to be thankful for."

"Indeed have I," said the man, in a choking voice. "Heaven's especial grace has granted life to the last of nine who in this boat made that island in quest of water."

"This is horrible," gasped Hal. "Horrible, indeed! I have heard of such things, but hardly believed it could be true that a race of man-eaters existed."

"I shall once more see my wife and child," broke in the rescued man.

"I hope you will, sir," said Hal, in heartfelt tones. "I hope you will thus bring joy to the hearts of a mother and daughter who sorrow for you deeply as one dead."

The man started, gazed long and intently at Hal, and then slowly said:

"What mean you? That you know them?"

"I do. You are Mr. Mason."

"You know me?" said the gentleman, in a half-dazed manner. "Then who are you?"

"I am Hal Herrick."

"I've heard the name before. And you know my wife?"

"Yes, sir, and Minnie—excuse me—Miss Mason, too."

"You do? And when did you see them last?" he asked eagerly.

"A couple of months or so ago."

Once aroused, and with a new hope warming the blood in his veins, the gentleman performed herculean tasks, and ere the moon sank, near the midnight hour, the long boat was thoroughly provisioned and watered for a long cruise.

In less than a week they were crossed by a homeward bound vessel, the captain of which, on hearing their story, took them on board and assigned them quarters in the cabin.

A speedy trip followed, a trip every day of which was as pleasant as a smiling spring day. They were bound for New York, and here Mr. Mason and Hal landed. From here was a journey of—we won't say how many miles—then a few hours by steamboat, then a stage ride of a few miles, with all the passengers gazing at Hal in surprise, and then Beechwood was reached.

Who can describe such a meeting as followed between Mr. Mason and his family? We confess our inability, and leave it entirely to the reader's imagination.

Hal broke the news of Mr. Mason's safety and then withdrew. He had reached the street gate when a shout attracted his attention, and he saw a figure flying along hatless, elbows thrown back, head bent eagerly forward.

It was Denny Willberry.

CHAPTER XVII.

REVENGE.

In another minute the two boys had each other by the hand, shaking fervidly, Denny too much blown, and Hal too full of emotion to utter a word.

And Hal briefly outlined his history since that eventful night on which they parted, as they walked again toward the academy.

Obadiah received Hal with a beaming face.

Hal remained at the academy until evening, when, a message from Mr. Mason having reached him, he went to spend the evening with the reunited family.

What a happy evening that was.

Hal did not reach the academy until after midnight, nor did he get to sleep for several hours after getting into bed, yet he was up and dressed at six o'clock ready to start for home.

He had not timed himself for the purpose, but yet arrived at the village near his home just as a bell struck the hour of two; the surrogate's office was only a couple of blocks away, and toward this Hal turned his steps, his lips compressed, his brows contracted.

At that minute Mrs. Herrick and her son were watching the transferring documents, which were to put in her hands the wealth she had schemed to procure as they passed from hand to hand to be signed.

Mrs. Herrick was as hard and as cold-looking as a marble statue, but Ben, with less command over his feelings, could not keep from his face an exultant look, and when the executors passed an instrument to the judge, after affixing their names in a plainly reluctant manner, Ben leaned over and whispered:

"How's this, old gal? That job of mine has paid well, hasn't it?"

"Hush, you fool!" hissed his mother, under her breath. "You will be heard."

"Mrs. Herrick," said the judge, after scanning the instrument, "you will affix your name to this bond, and then, by order of the court, everything of which Mr. Herrick died seized, is in your possession."

She paused. Then, recollecting herself, began to write.

Hardly had the first letter of her name been formed when the door was opened, a form glided in, and a stern voice cried:

"Hold!"

The guilty pair glanced toward the door and turned ashen gray.

"It is his ghost!" shrieked Ben, every separate hair on end, his eyes starting forward from their sockets.

"It is not his ghost," was the stern reply, "but Hal Herrick himself, alive and well, and fully able to enjoy that of which you sought to rob him. Vile wretches, begone! Go hence and never let me see your faces again."

"Found out!" gasped Ben, and made a bolt for the door. He reached it, stopped short, uttered a shrill cry, and staggered back trembling in every joint.

What had he seen?

It was a man, but battered and bruised and held together with court-plaster and bandages to such an extent as to almost lack the semblance of a human being; one eye was gone and one leg hung stiff and useless as he was supported in by two constables.

At sight of him Mrs. Herrick also grew ghastly pale, and clutching at her bosom, breathed convulsively:

"Dick Morrough!"

Ben wailed out these words, and then, too weak to stand, fell upon a sofa, where he lay trembling like an aspen leaf.

A wild and awful look crossed the strong woman's face. For one minute irresolution was pictured there, then it passed, being replaced by terrible desperation.

"Dick Morrough, you sought vengeance, and wish to see me hung. See how I cheat you and the law."

She touched the spring in the ring, and the tiny poison-tipped needle darted forth and into her cheek; again and

again she punctured her skin ere they became aware of what she was doing.

"I am dying," she said calmly, "and you might as well let me be, for you cannot hinder the working of the poison. Give me a little space to breathe. I may have been wicked, but in dying have a little mercy for me."

They separated a little, and Hal, who had been sharply watching her, saw her eyes directed towards Ben. Instantly he divined her intentions.

"Look out. She is going to try and kill her precious son."

The warning came just in time, for even as Hal spoke the wretched woman-fiend was bounding towards the groveling wretch she called her son.

Prevented in this, she poured forth her wrath on Hal, and a few minutes later, with curses deep and awful on her lips she passed to that bourne whence no traveler returns.

Very little more need be added here. It will be sufficient to say that Dick Morrough subsequently died of the wounds he had received at Ben's hands, while Ben Larue, breaking down abjectly acknowledged and confessed all. He was put on trial and the jury found him guilty of murder in the first degree!

He was led to the gallows two months later and on it expiated the misdeeds of an evil, ill-spent life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MARRIAGE BELLS.

Hal had his hands full for nearly a month, in attending to and straightening out his affairs; when everything was in order he returned to Beechwood, and, lo! what a change he saw on reaching the academy.

There on the porch sat Mr. Grierson, and beside him was the Quaker.

The schools were rivals no longer, the boat clubs were now merged into one, the "Boss Boat Club" of Beechwood, which published the challenge:

"We claim to be champions, and are willing to contest the title with any who doubt our assertion."

Hal soon learned the particulars: Mr. Grierson being unable to superintend the studies of his pupils, had entered into a partnership with the Quaker, the former to attend to the clerical, and the latter to all the professional work.

Here Hal remained until he graduated, when he took a college course lasting two years.

Then Beechwood saw him again when he came back to claim his bride; 'mid the ringing of bells he and Minnie Mason were pronounced man and wife. Then came a grand supper, tearful good-bys, and the beautiful bride was carried away to grace the old Herrick mansion.

When penning the above I thought my story finished, but consider it incomplete now unless I append a letter received this morning from an old friend:

"Friend Howard:—I have been greatly pleased with thy latest effort, the Rival Boat Clubs, the opening chapters of which I saw this week. I believe it to be a faithful recital of what really took place at the time, and though my hairs are turning gray, I cannot but feel interested in the story you relate.

"It may be interesting to you to know that Grierson departed this life about two months since, and that to-day I entered in my school list the name of Hal Herrick, Jr. With regards, I am, thy friend,

"Obadiah Strong."

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HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

OUR COURAGE AND RESOURCES.

The courage and resources of the Nation are so abundant that America's success in the war is beyond question if they are properly organized and intelligently used. The economic and financial condition of the country was never so strong and America's spirit was never more aroused to the importance and necessity of going forward, resolutely and regardless of sacrifices, to the accomplishment of the great task to which God has called us.

VEGETABLE WASTE FOR THE GARDEN.

Chemical analyses of the ash of household wastes, made at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, show that there is marked fertilizing value in such common refuse as banana skins, orange skins, grape-fruit skins, lemon skins, apple peelings, cantaloup rinds, potato peelings, pea pods, bean strings and stems, tea leaves, coffee grounds, eggshells, bones, peanut shells, tobacco, fruit stones, etc. These are recommended for fertilizing home gardens, and when spaded into the soil give not only chemical plant food but also humus.

OUR CREDIT AND OUR ARMY.

We must realize that the Government's credit is vital to the success of the war; that it underlies every activity. It is a sacred duty of every citizen, and it should be regarded as a glorious privilege by every patriot to uphold the Government's credit with the same kind of self-sacrifice and nobility of soul that our gallant sons exhibit when they die for us on the battle fields of Europe. It is as imperative to sustain the Government's credit as it is to sustain our armies, because our armies can not be sustained unless the Government's credit is always above reproach.

FOOD SAVING ORGANIZES TOY SALESMEN.

When traveling salesmen through the country were asked to aid food conservation, it was found that the toy travelers had no official organization. Whereupon President Gilbert, of the Toy Manufacturers' Association, undertook to form an organization which would not only enable the toy salesmen to co-operate in food saving, but bring them together for general trade betterment. This organization now has headquarters at 28 West Twenty-third Street, New York City, in charge of Charles E. Graham, and salesmen in that industry are invited to join.

KEEP YOUR LIBERTY BOND.

The man who subscribes for a Government bond, and is advertised as a patriot for doing so, is not

a patriot if he immediately sells that bond on the market when he does not imperatively need the money. It is not mere subscription to a bond that helps the Government; it is by actually lending money to the Government and not by merely promising it and shifting the load to someone else that the citizen really helps in this great time.

There is no desire, however, on the part of the Government to prevent or to interfere with the freedom of legitimate trading in Government bonds—that is, trading in good faith.

HOW TO KEEP HONEY.

In selling honey as a substitute for sugar the retail grocer and his customers may encounter some difficulties through lack of knowledge of storing and handling this product. Housewives usually put the honey in the cellar for safe-keeping, probably the worst possible place, says the Pacific Rural Press, as honey absorbs moisture from the atmosphere and will become thin and in time sour. Comb honey kept in a damp place will be hurt in appearance as well as quality. A practical rule is to keep honey in any place where salt remains dry. If honey has granulated or candied, put the can containing it in a larger vessel holding water no hotter than the hand can be borne in. If the water is too hot, there is danger of spoiling the color and ruining the flavor of the honey. The can of honey should be supported on a block of wood in the vessel of water, so that the heat from the stove will not be too intense.

DIET TESTS OF COTTONSEED FLOUR.

A series of experiments with cottonseed flour was lately conducted at the University of Texas by Prof. Anna F. Richardson and Miss Jennie R. Bear, of the home economics department, according to the Manufacturers Record. Women students volunteered as subjects, and for five days ate a special diet made up of cottonseed flour in combination with corn meal, butter, sugar, and grapejuice. Each subject has 100 grams, or about 2½ ounces of cottonseed flour, in the form of bread. Results showed an average digestibility for the protein of cottonseed flour to be about 85 per cent., placing it in the same class as other cereals and breadstuffs. The conclusions are that cottonseed flour contains a very high percentage of tissue-building material; and will replace to advantage one-third of the wheat flour in ordinary diet. A bakery in New York City and another in Boston are reported to be regularly using cottonseed flour in making bread.

OUT FOR MONEY

—OR—

A POOR BOY'S CHANCE IN A BIG CITY

By J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XXII (Continued)

"Oh, yes, he is, missus; the best friend I have."
"Well, it's not that I mean. He's more nor a fri'nd, I do be thinkin'. Who is it, ye young rascal? Is this the father ye've been lookin' for all these days?"

"That's what he is," answered Phil, with a happy smile.

"Troth, then, he does yez credit, an' ye're an honor to him besides. Excuse me, sor, av I tock abeout the bye before um, but yez have found a son that yez'll be proud av all yere days, a' I hope they'll be manny, so I do."

"Thank you, ma'am," said the captain, courteously. "I think that he will be a comfort to me. In fact, I feel that he is one already."

"Gee! but you'll be puttin' on more airs than ever now," said Kitty.

"Howld yer whistle, Kitty," said Mrs. Mulligan, as Butts came in. "Sure, yez know very well that there's no imitashin pride abeout Phil, an' he'd be the same to us av he wor twinty millionaires rolled into one. There's none av the snob abeout th' bye, captain dear."

"I'm sure there isn't, from what I have seen so far, Mrs. Mulligan; and I'm obliged to you for saying it."

"Troth, I've nothin' but good words to say abeout um, sor, and there's none as knows um but would say the same. He's a bye to be proud of, sor, an' I hope that it will be manny years that yez'll have him wid yez."

"Thank you, ma'am; I hope the same."

"Yez'll stay to supper, Phil, yez an' the captain? Butts, me bye, run around to the Dutchman's and get a coffee cake an' tell um I'll pay him to-morry. Kitty, get eout the best chiny. Yez'll stay, Phil?"

"Yes, missus, but I want to know if the old woman ever dropped a word as to either me or Bess, who we were, you understand?"

"I niver had anny worrds wid her on anny subject, good or bad," said Mrs. Mulligan, "but whin she wor turned eout an' her furnaychure trun on th' sidewalk, I tuck a little table wid a dhrawer in ut that th' byes wor kickin' abeout, an' it do be neow in th' room off th' kitchen, an' it's the same thot thot vilyun Hiram shtud his lamp on th' night he near set fire to th' place."

"There might be something in it," said Phil. "I'll go and look."

He went into the little room and presently came

out with a dusty little bundle wrapped in an old newspaper in his hand.

"I've found something," he said, tearing off the paper, when a gold ring fell to the floor.

"What have ye there?" asked Mrs. Mulligan.

"A gold ring and inside it has the letters, 'J. H. to M. W., 1886.'"

"That is your mother's wedding ring," said the captain, excitedly.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHO BESS WAS.

Phil opened the little bundle and laid its contents on the table, the others gathering around.

Besides the ring there were a pair of little shoes, a baby's shirt, a coral necklace, two or three gold clasps, a case with a locket in it and a small bundle of papers.

"I don't seem to recognize all these things," said the captain. "The coral and gold clasps were never worn by Philip, although the shoes may have been. The ring, however, I am sure of."

"And to think that these things have been in the little table drawer all this time and we never knew it," said Phil.

"The old woman must have forgot thim, or they'd niver hov been there," said Mrs. Mulligan. "It's a wondher she hadn't pawned thim long ago."

"The coral is marked 'E. S.' on the clasp," said Phil, "and the little shirt has the same letters, and so has the locket, and here's a baby's picture."

"Sure, yez cud never make thim letthers shtand fur yere name, me bye," said Mrs. Mulligan.

"No, you couldn't, but I wonder if—they might stand for Bess, though."

"The 'E' could stand for Elizabeth and Bess is short for that," said the captain.

"That's it; these are the kid's things, and the ring got mixed in with them," cried Phil. "I guess they're all hers, except the shoes perhaps. The 'E. S.' is her name. What does the 'S.' stand for, I wonder?"

"Look at the papers," said the captain. "They may furnish some clue."

The papers were dusty and yellow, and some of them, especially those which were written, were so blurred that they were scarcely decipherable.

Some of the newspaper slips referred to Phil, but at length the boy came across one which was as follows:

"The search for the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stafford has so far resulted very unsatisfactorily, and the police have been spurred to greater activity by an increased reward. One trouble seems to be that no one is suspected, and so there is no clue to the abductors."

"That settles the 'S.' part of it," said Phil; "but you can't tell where they lived. Here is another."

The boy thereupon read from another newspaper slip as follows:

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

The British Isles imported in 1916 91,729,792 pounds of castor oil beans valued at \$3,567,787, and 5,701 tons of castor oil valued at \$1,212,367. Seventy-five per cent. of all this oil was used for lubricating the engines of aeroplanes.

The mysterious disappearance of a large number of chickens in the west part of the county has been cleared up. The other afternoon when Aaron Strausmire of Gibsonburg, O., shot an American eagle, measuring seven feet and eight inches from tip to tip and weighing twelve pounds.

One hundred and sixty-five moles, whose skins were worth a total of \$35, were caught in traps by Glenn Bailey, a fourteen-year-old boy living east of Eugene, Ore. Only four traps were used and the catch was made in a single season. Some firms are paying from 35 to 40 cents for mole pelts now, it is declared. The demand for them is greater than ever before.

T. R. Trotter, City Clerk of Pomona, Cal., and his sister, Mrs. F. L. Jesscott, of Philadelphia, met recently after forty-two years' of separation. Trotter left his sister in Cork, Ireland, to become a sailor and within a few years lost track of her. He has been City Clerk in Pomona for twenty years. A month ago Mrs. Jesscott picked up a Los Angeles newspaper and read a story containing the name of her brother. She immediately communicated with him.

William F. Moorhead, eighty years old, has been pardoned from the penitentiary by Acting Governor Crossley, of Missouri. He is the oldest man who ever served in the prison. He was pardoned outright and his civil rights were restored. Moorhead, while marshal of the little sawmill town of Anniston, Mississippi County, shot and killed Roy Jenkins about two and a half years ago. He was convicted of murder in the second degree and sentenced to ten years in prison.

It is easy to visualize the course of a dollar saved from waste and invested in Government bonds: First, it goes to the Government as a loan for the war; second, it is expended by the Government for food, clothing, and ammunition which go directly to a gallant soldier or sailor, whose fighting strength is kept up by the food, whose body is kept warm by the clothing, and whose enemy is hit by the ammunition. It has not been expended in the purchase of needless food and clothing for the man at home, and is therefore released for the use of the soldier; it is saved wealth to the man at home and can be

loaned to his Government at interest, with resulting benefit to himself and to his Government.

Secretary of the Navy Daniels has sent to Congress a report of the Board on Navy Yards and Stations, recommending Alameda, Cal., as the site for a new navy yard. Plans for the station to be constructed at Alameda contemplate the expenditure of \$36,307,000. The report also recommended improvements to all naval establishments along the Pacific coast. The navy yard is to be constructed upon an unreclaimed land that is held by Alameda. The site is considered unusually good because of its direct communication with all trans-continental railroad lines. Gun factories, arsenals and storehouses, as well as the usual yard equipment, are included in the estimates. Two drydocks of 1,000 feet clearance each are planned, the purpose being to secure facilities for the repair of the largest dreadnoughts and battle cruisers.

The Naval Aircraft Factory erected at the Philadelphia Navy Yard is completed and in operation. This plant, which covers three acres, the building being 400 by 400 feet, was begun in August, the structure completed in November, machinery installed and the keel of the first flying boat was laid ninety days after building work was begun. The plant, with equipment, cost about \$1,000,000. Two thousand skilled workmen are now needed to operate the plant to its capacity. Almost every type of craftsman can help in some of the many kinds of work necessary to make seaplanes. Machinists of all kinds will be needed to make and assemble the parts. Sheet-metal workers, acetylene welders, braziers, bicycle tube benders, coppersmiths and wireworkers can all find employment. There is very skillful woodwork to be done in creating a flying machine, so there is a keen demand for cabinet makers, pattern makers, boat builders, joiners and millmen of all kinds. Women can sew the covers on the wings and perform some of the lighter wood-working operations. It is expected that, owing to war conditions, several hundred women will be employed. A good many laborers will also be required. The need is urgent, and it is hoped that hundreds of skilled workmen will register at the Board of Labor Improvement at the Philadelphia Navy Yard for work at the Naval Aircraft Factory. This factory will not only produce a portion of the aircraft needed by the Navy, relieving other manufacturers for Army work, but will enable the Navy to conduct experimental operations without clogging the wheels of production in private plants and to ascertain the costs of airplane construction, which will aid in the adjustment of prices of airplanes.

INTERESTING TOPICS

800-POUND FREAK DIES.

"Baby Jim" Simons, colored, said to be the heaviest man in the world, died at Philadelphia, December 28. He weighed 800 pounds and for years had been one of the sights of circus side shows. He was thirty-seven years old and is survived by a widow and two small children.

The body will be taken to the former home of Simons in Texas. For its transportation it was necessary to charter a freight car.

JAW OF A BEHEMOTH

The lower jaw of a mammoth, said to be the only similar relic of the extinct behemoth now in existence, was brought to San Francisco, Cal., recently from Point Barrow, Alaska, by the power schooner Herman.

The relic was dug out of the snow by natives while the vessel was in Point Barrow harbor. The beast which possessed the jaw is said to have roamed over the Alaskan plains thousands of years ago. The jaw will be presented to an Eastern museum.

A live polar bear was also captured near Point Barrow and brought down on the schooner.

DIVER GETS COPPER.

Walter McRay, a deep sea diver of Tacoma, Wash., proposed to the copper mining people at Cordova, Alaska, to recover the ore dropped overboard in loading ships for one-half the value of the ore recovered.

They told him he was welcome to try, and hoped he would be lucky enough to make fair wages. Hundreds of tons of copper annually have been lost overboard during the loading of ships at that place, and no previous effort had ever been made to recover it.

An official report states that McRay has so far earned a trifle over \$5,000 a month as his share, and persons who have recently been at the scene say that when he really gets going good his earnings will probably far exceed \$10,000 a month for a long time to come.

30,000 MEN ARE WANTED.

A new branch of the National Army is being established to relieve soldiers on duty at munition plants and shipyards. Only men over thirty-one years of age are wanted for this duty. Men with Cuban, Philippine and Boxer experience and ex-policemen and firemen are preferred. The pay at enlistment will be \$30 a month. The chances for advancement are up to the man himself. Enlistment of married men is authorized. Dependency is no

bar. This is an opportunity for men beyond registration age.

Men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one and thirty-one and forty may enlist in any branch of the service. There are opportunities for chauffeurs, clerks, bookkeepers and mechanics to work at their trades. Apply at any recruiting office for information.

BETTER HOTEL USE OF MEAT.

Pigs' feet are neglected, said R. E. Harris, of Armour & Co., speaking before the Nebraska Hotel Association recently. This butchers' specialty is not eaten to the extent that it should be because it is usually undercooked. When properly cooked, so that the meat is ready to fall away from the bone, it is cheap and palatable. Mutton, veal, and beef scraps, incorporated in sausage formulas, decrease the demand, whereas palatable sausage can be made a substitute for beefsteak, roast beef, and other meats which must be conserved for war purposes. To meet the scarcity of steaks he suggests the use of other cuts, such as stewing and casserole portions, and advises hotel stewards to purchase beef by the quarter, have a small cold storage plant, and skilfully work the different cuts into the menu, serving the steaks, rib roasts, and pot roasts, using shanks and bones for soup meat, corning some of the short rib portions, and using the neck and suet for mincemeat.

LOS ANGELES SCHOOLS BAR GERMAN STUDIES.

The study of German in the public schools of Los Angeles will be abolished next month. All German clubs and associations will be absolutely barred from the schools.

An active course of instruction, "to expose the unjustifiable and vicious practice of the enemy," will be introduced in the German classes until they are stopped at the end of the term.

The only exception to the elimination order is made for high school senior German students, who will graduate at the end of the year. They will be allowed to continue the study of German until next June. After that there will be no German taught and no German clubs allowed in the schools of Los Angeles until the termination of the war.

No textbooks, no instruction, no remarks will be allowed in the high school German classes, to be maintained until June, that will in any way interfere with the anti-German orders of the school board.

The Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools Albert Shiels made this announcement after a secret session recently.

HUSTLING JOE BROWN

—OR—

THE BOY WHO KEPT THE TOWN CLOCK

By WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XXIII (Continued).

"Yes, sir; we caught them in the act," replied Joe. "They are safe in the lock-up, and to-morrow they will be jailed."

"And see that they are. Your success depends upon it. Now, have you time for a little talk? I know you are tired, but to-night I leave this part of the country forever, and before I go I have some things I want to say."

"Certainly; talk away," replied Joe, abandoning all thought of sleep.

The leather man dropped wearily into a chair.

"First about Jim Redding's letter," he said. "I have read it, Joe."

"Well, sir?"

"Tell him that I can forgive, but I can never forget. That the one thing he and his new associates cannot have is my services. Tell him that, Joe."

"Yes, sir."

"And now understand the situation, Joe. When I was a lad Jim Redding was my chum and dearer to me than a brother. We served our time as machinists together. He was a poor mechanic in every sense of the word. I was an unusually good one. I developed into an inventor. All the original machines devised and patented for the Wapamsett works were made and patented by me. It was I who invented the Redding rifle; it was I who laid the foundation for the great business Jim Redding built up. He considered himself then a great business man. I consider him a very poor one. He robbed me of the fruit of my labors, he froze me out of the Wapamsett Company, he lied to me, tricked and deceived me, he made me what I am, and now he confesses to all that and asks my forgiveness and my help to aid him in building his fortune anew."

"And you have aided him, sir. But for you——" began Joe, but the leather man cut him short.

"It was done for you, for my daughter's sake," he said. "Elsie loves you, and you love her. Tell her so and all will be well. Tell Jim Redding what I just told you, that I can forgive but never forget. I will not come out of my seclusion and work as an inventor for this new company, as my brother and his associates request."

"Try and think better of it, sir," said Joe. "It may interfere with the work I have begun."

"No," replied the leather man. "My mind is made up. It cannot be."

"But the colonel's papers——" began Joe.

"Are here," interrupted the leather man, producing a sealed packet. "It was I who took them from

him while the backs of those two scoundrels were turned. Take them, Joe; give them to him. They contain important business secrets, without which this man Dodger can never succeed in downing Jim Redding. Were I like most men, I should have promptly destroyed them. But I am different. Two wrongs do not make a right. For me to rob my enemy would be as wicked as was his dastardly act when he deceived and robbed me. I return his papers through you. This is my revenge!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

The leather man arose and started for the door.

"Wait," said Joe. "Don't you want to see the papers I took from those men?"

"Not I. I don't feel the slightest interest in them," was the reply. "Have you looked them over, Joe?"

"Not yet, sir. I was just too tired, and made up my mind to leave them until morning."

"You will find them of the greatest value. I heard those two scoundrels discuss them before I called you to the Ramsdell house. Keep them carefully, and allow no one to share your secret until they are safe in Jim Redding's hands. But now I must go. Good-by, Joe. Be good to Elsie, and she will be good to you."

"But where do you go, sir? Why not——"

"No matter where I go. That is my business. It will be useless to seek me at the cave on Black Mountain. I shall never return there. Good-by, boy. Keep on hustling to the end."

Thus saying, the hermit hustled out of the door, and that was the last Joe was destined to see of his singular friend for many a day.

Feeling now that there was no such thing as sleep, Joe turned up the lamp and proceeded to study his find.

He could not understand all he read, but he understood enough to see that Colonel Redding had been the victim of an infamous plot, to which his wife was a party.

Most of the letters were from Dodger's lawyers to Dodger, but there were a few pen copies of letters of his own written to them.

These seemed to Joe the most damaging of all.

There were also many letters from Mrs. Redding to Dodger.

Joe only read a few of these, but he read enough to show him that the woman was deeply in the plot, and that her intention was to marry Dodger as soon as she could obtain a divorce.

Joe bundled both sets of papers together and tied them in one package, which he hid in a secure place.

By this time it was morning, and he went home to breakfast.

His next care was to wire Col. Redding, under an assumed name, at an obscure hotel in New York of his important discoveries.

(To be continued.)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

USING UP REDWOOD.

Constantly increasing production of redwood lumber in Humboldt County, California, means that in less than a century the only commercial redwood forest in the world will be stripped bare, according to compilations made by George A. Kellogg, Secretary of the Humboldt Chamber of Commerce. In 1895 it was estimated that the standing redwood timber in the county would be sufficient for 200 years, but since that time the capacity of the mills has been more than doubled, with prospects for a continuous increase in the future.

Out of 538,000 acres of redwood timber standing untouched before lumbering operations were begun in the county, 93,000 acres have been cut over. This cut represents some of the best timber of the county, for the bottom lands along the rivers where the best timber stands have been harvested first.

Redwood lumber thus far produced from the forests of the county has represented a value of \$160,317,237 and has totaled 9,300,865,526 board feet.

CITY COLLEGE LARGEST OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD.

The College of the City of New York is now the largest municipal university in the world. In point of the number of students it is the biggest college in the United States, having more than 11,000 names on its rolls, exclusive of the Signal Corps detachment which is receiving instruction in the buildings.

During the past year the college has expanded from its original enrolment of 10,760. In addition to the five building group on Washington Heights, there are now branches in the Boys' High School building, Brooklyn; the Woolworth Building and the Commerce Building—the old home of the City College at Twenty-third Street.

Despite the war, there has been an increase in the registration of the day session. The evening session totals 3,868, having passed the figures for the day session. The night figures include students in the Brooklyn branch, the main building, the Commerce Building and Government specialists.

VARNISHING SOLES OF BOOTS

In view of the shortage of leather and its consequent increase in price, any device or process is welcome which will lengthen the life of our footwear. In this connection it cannot be too widely known that varnishing the soles of boots and shoes makes them wear four or five times as long as they would do without this treatment. An inferior type of copal varnish is quite good enough for the purpose, and half a pint, costing, with suitable brush,

about twenty-five cents, should keep one person's boots treated for a year or more.

The leather must be quite dry and bare when the varnish is applied. New boots should therefore be worn for a day before treatment, so as to remove the black varnish from the soles. The operation is carried out by brushing on the varnish, at intervals of, say, half an hour, until the leather will not soak up any more. This condition may be recognized from the surface remaining shiny all over, instead of becoming dull in places. After being hung up to dry for about twelve hours, the boots are ready for wear.

MILES OF RAILWAY THROUGH WATERLESS COUNTRY.

The longest tangent in the world, 330 miles without the slightest variation from a straight line, occurs in the railway linking Western Australia to the eastern States, which was formally opened on November 12. In the 1,052 miles of line between Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie there is not a single tunnel and very few cuts, while at only a few places on the eastern section is the ruling grade of one in eighty approached. The 330-mile straight occurs in the great limestone region of the Mullarbor Plain which the line traverses for over 500 miles, a region in which there are no hills, no valleys, no rivers, no trees, and no water.

When the line was begun in 1912 the country along four-fifths of the route had not a single inhabitant except a few wandering aborigines, and absolutely no permanent surface water. Indeed water has been the one great difficulty of the line. At a few points reservoirs have proved successful but for the most part the only supply available has been drawn from wells and bores. This water contains such a high proportion of solid matter and acids that it is very unsuitable for locomotive use, rendering special devices necessary, while in places it is salt and condensers have had to be erected. At one period during construction water for all purposes had to be carried over 300 miles by train on the western section.

The line gives the first communication by land between the two halves of Australia and opens up an area of a quarter of a million square miles now unoccupied. In spite of the scanty rainfall, averaging well under 10 inches a year, much of this country is well grassed and grows salt bush and other edible plants which would carry large numbers of sheep and cattle if water can be provided. It will also give access to regions which may contain mineral deposits. The cost of the line has been about \$40,000,000.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

CHICKS HATCHED BELOW ZERO.

Carl Smith, a farmer residing near Rawson, O., has a biddy that is no slacker. Recently the hen stole a nest, laid sufficient eggs to cover and then began her three weeks' setting period. In due time six little chicks were hatched out when the thermometer was 18 degrees below zero.

SACK OF FLOUR, \$5,075.

The "Gridley" sack of flour started on its journey by the San Francisco Shriners and given further impetus by the Honolulu Temple, to be auctioned at all temples in the United States for the benefit of the Red Cross, broke all records at Helena, Mont., the other night, when Algeria Temple ran the auction up to \$5,035, almost five times the sum bid by the Honolulu Temple.

BEAVERS USED SCARECROW.

Farmers living along the Walla Walla River, Wash., are again being bothered by beavers, which have increased in numbers to a great extent the past ten years, and their dams frequently interfere with irrigation projects and flood farming lands.

W. H. Gross, living near Whitman station, has complained to the game authorities that a beaver dam has shut off his irrigation supply and it is probable the dam will be dynamited. Mr. Gross erected a scarecrow to frighten the animals away when they started building the dam. The first night the beavers did no work, but the second night they cut down the scarecrow and used it in the dam.

TAKING INVENTORY OF MUNITION PLANTS.

The Government is taking an inventory of all the plants in the country capable of producing munitions and whose output at any time in the past, in whole or in part, has been munitions. Thousands of smaller plants scattered over the country have gone into the munition industry on a limited scale. Factories engaged in manufacturing farming implements have during the last three years found the business profitable. Many of them are now installing machinery to go into the manufacture on a big scale.

Whether or not a Secretary of Munitions is created, whoever is responsible for the furnishing of the American Armies with munitions faces a heavy task. The determination manifested now is to develop forehandedness in this important part of the war programme.

DROVE DUCKS AWAY.

Fish that were so hungry that they jumped out of the water in their efforts to obtain food and which, by continually picking of their feathers, drove all of the ducks off of Lake Alice, are the background of the stories brought to Michell, S. D., recently by Game Warden H. S. Hedrick.

Mr. Hedrick says that when he first "discovered" Lake Alice, the fish there, of which the lake was crowded, were entirely out of proportion, their bodies being of snake-like dimensions. The lake was cleaned of all growth and fish were starving. He immediately set men to transferring the fish to other bodies of water where they immediately improved as to health and size.

After four years of work the fish in the lake have returned to normal size and are now among the best in the State. In the four years twenty-seven carloads of fish have been transferred to other bodies of water.

U. S. GUARDS SECRET OF NEW GUN

Securely locked in a safe in the office of Major General William Crozier, chief of ordnance, is the report and recommendation of the ordnance officers who tested the operations of the Browning machine gun, which has been adopted as the most useful light piece of ordnance to the American army.

There the data will remain for the edification of General Crozier, and his chief, Secretary of War Baker, and perhaps the membership of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, if they seek light on the subject, but no information about the gun will be given out by War Department officers.

Secretary of War Baker declined to permit any information concerning the Browning gun and its reported efficiency to be given out by the War Department on the ground that any descriptive matter printed about the firearm "would give comfort to the enemy."

Application for information descriptive of the man who patented the Browning gun and some of his other patents met the same response from ordnance department officers, who declared that all information concerning the firearm or its creator has been tabooed since a story, written some months ago by the Committee on Public Information and approved by ordnance officers was finally "killed" by order of the War Department censor.

It is known, however, that Browning formerly was connected with the Colt firearm company, and that the Colt plant and "several others" will be utilized in making the Browning gun for American use.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JANUARY 27, 1918.

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Good Current News Articles

The army's corps of intelligence police has been increased to a strength of 300 men under general orders made public by the War Department recently. The order sends 250 to duty under the War College Division of the General Staff. This special force was formed to gather military information, and the Intelligence Division of the General Staff is co-operating through it in preventing destruction of war munitions or munition plants by plotters.

Dressed in dainty brown overall bloomers, eight young women of Washburn, Wis. started work at the Kenfield-Lamoreaux sawmill recently. The company intends to employ about twenty women in places formerly held by men and boys. The women work on machines where the work is light and work fifty-five hours a week. The company has made work conditions as pleasant as possible. A rest room has been fitted up on the upper floor for them, equipped with rockers, tables, chairs and lavatories.

An aerial mail service in America has been proposed between Nantucket Island and New Bedford, and is expected to be in operation shortly, but—for the time being, at least—America has been forestalled by Italy. There exists already a regular mail service between the mainland and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. The one route connects Naples and Palermo and is covered in two and one-half hours. The other route covers Civitavecchia (near Rome) and Terranova-Pausania, and the journey occupies one hour and forty minutes. A third line, as is to be gleaned in a recent number of "Flying," has quite recently been established between Turin and Rome.

According to a dispatch from Geneva, Switzerland, the Krupps have opened a branch factory at Lucerne with a capital of \$7,500,000. Among the directors are Arthur Krupp and Counsellor Ernest

Hauer, director of the principal Krupp factory at Essen. The Swiss law demands that when new enterprises are established in Switzerland their objects shall be set forth; and complying with this the company declares its purpose to be the fabrication of arms, cannon and munitions of war; the acquisition of factories, mines and metals, and also their sale. There is evidence that Germany realizes that the concentration of her munition and armor plants in the Essen district, which is only some forty to fifty miles from the German frontier, is a permanent risk; and during the war, particularly during the latter phases, she has been developing large munition factories at points more remote from danger.

Grins and Chuckles

First Chauffeur—There's one thing I hate to run over, and that's a baby. Second Chauffeur—So do I; them nursing-bottles raise Cain with tires.

Church—Our soprano deserves a good deal of credit. Gotham—Why so? "Why, her father used to go about the streets peddling fish." "Inherits her voice, does she?"

Mrs. Oldwed—What is your husband supposed to be worth? Mrs. Newed—Really, I can't say. But I'm sure he has depreciated considerably since our marriage six months ago."

A prominent physician, upon opening the door of his consulting-room, asked: "Who has been waiting longest?" "I have," spoke up a man in a stentorian voice. "I'm your tailor. I delivered your clothes."

"What do you think of my last poem?" asked the man with hair like a skye terrier's. "It means a great deal more than it says." "Yes," answered Miss Cayenne. "I don't see how it could mean any less."

"Mr. Dabble," said a lawyer to a witness in the box, "at the time these papers were executed you were speculating, were you not?" "Yes, sir." "You were in oil?" "I was." "And what are you in now?" "Bankruptcy," was the solemn reply.

After reading the regular lesson one afternoon a young woman who was teaching a class of youngsters in a Sunday School folded the paper and began to ask questions. "What little boy," she persuasively remarked, "can tell me the difference between the 'quick' and the 'dead'?" "I can, Miss Mary!" exclaimed a small boy named Tommy, excitedly wriggling his hand. "All right, Tommy," responded the teacher. "Lou may tell the class." "The 'quick' was the triumphant rejoinder of Tommy, "is those that hops out of the way of automobiles; those that don't is dead."

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

EARN FOR 3,000 SHEEP.

The sheep barn which is being built by the Government at the Indian agency near Forest City, C. D., is nearing completion. It is 35 by 185 feet in size, with a wing on the end 10 by 155, and one on the other end 20 by 80 feet. In front of the barn will be a corral 150 by 237 feet in size, divided into pens for greater convenience in handling the sheep. The Government will have 3,000 sheep at the agency next season, divided into two bands of 1,500 sheep each.

2,269 CARS STOLEN IN 1917.

From January 1, 1917, to noon, December 29, 2,269 automobiles were stolen in the streets of New York, according to a report sent to Commissioner Woods by the Automobile Squad.

Of this number 1905 were recovered by members of the squad and 366 are still missing. The Police Department recovered eighty-five cars that were brought into New York from other towns and cities. The police estimate is that 428 automobiles were stolen solely for "joy riding."

LIVED FOR YEARS IN A PLACE BUILT FOR CHICKENS

J. K. Ewing, Humane Officer of East St. Louis, and Mrs. Jane Law, Truant Officer, recently asked County Judge Messick for an order to commit Mrs. Anstee Latieur, eight-five years old, to an asylum or home. This action was taken after it was learned that until recently Mrs. Thompson lived in a shed in the rear of her home of her granddaughter, Mrs. Inez Thompson, at No. 1227 North Forty-ninth Street. A part of the shed was used as a chicken house.

Since fire threatened the shed the other day, Mrs. Latieur has lived in her granddaughter's kitchen. Mrs. Thompson told Ewing her grandmother was feeble and unable to walk and had been satisfied with her quarters in the shed.

CHILD SHOT AND KILLED BY BLIND GRANDFATHER.

Seven-year-old Dorothy Little was accidentally shot and killed by her blind grandfather, Stephen Cunliffe, eighty-two years old, in the family home at No. 95 Johnston Avenue, Kearny, N. J., the other evening. Dorothy was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Little.

Ever since she learned to walk, the girl had been the constant companion of her grandfather. She led him on his walks outdoors and filled his pipe

when he sat inside. Last night she had guided him to his bedroom, when members of the family heard a pistol shot. They found Dorothy dead on the floor with a wound in the left breast.

Deputy County Physician Mulligan after investigating the case, detailed a policeman to stay in the Little home and watch over the heartbroken old man. Dr. Mulligan is satisfied the shooting was accidental.

HUGE BALLOON EXPLODES.

A giant balloon attached to the Fort Omaha government balloon school exploded in the balloon-house the other day, knocking down thirty-five men, seriously injuring Corporal L. F. Tracy, of Detroit, and endangering the entire fort, which was saved only by the most desperate work upon the part of the thousands of men stationed at the post. The balloon-house was filled with burning gas and the burning fabric was thrown in every direction.

The explosion shook the entire fort, bulged the walls of the balloon-house and broke all the windows. The soldiers re-entered the building and extinguished the flames in the presence of the two inflated balloons, the explosion of which would have meant death to all.

CONTROL MACHINE GUN FIRE.

Most machine guns shoot at the rate of from 450 to 700 shots a minute; but they never get off so many shots in any single minute, for it is always necessary to stop and reload the gun frequently, which takes time. And, moreover, as the vibration of the gun is terrific, it is often necessary to stop and renew the aim. Consequently the 1,000 shots a minute that the newspapers speak of become in reality from 200 to 400 shots a minute. Even this is too fast, for if one bullet strikes a man, at least half a dozen more will hit him before he falls.

One bullet will stop a man as well as ten; and besides inflicting this useless injury, shooting at a man more than once is a waste of ammunition. Moreover, the faster the gun fires the sooner the ammunition will be exhausted and the more quickly the gun will heat up.

In most models of machine guns now in use the rate of fire has been determined largely by the size and weight of the parts, and is therefore mostly a matter of chance; but one of the developments in the future is bound to be a machine gun in which the rate of fire can be controlled to suit the tactical requirements.

The unparalleled use of machine guns to-day has turned the efforts of scores of inventors in this direction, and already important advances in the direction of simplicity and lightness have been made.

ELECTRIC CIGAR CASE.



This handsome cigar case appears to be filled with fine cigars. If your friend smokes ask him to have a cigar with you. As he reaches out for one the cigars, like a flash, instantly disappear into the case entirely out of sight, greatly to his surprise and astonishment. You can beg his pardon and state you cigars left in the case. A slight pressure on sides of case causes the cigars to disappear as if by magic. By touching a wire at bottom of case the cigars instantly appear again in their proper position in the case. As real tobacco is used they are sure to deceive any one. It is one of the best practical jokes of the season. A novelty with which you can have lots of fun.

Price 35 cents, sent by parcel post, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., N. Y.

WILLARD-JOHNSON PRIZE-FIGHT PUZZLE.



Four strips of cardboard, each three inches by one and a half inches, showing Willard and Johnson in various absurd postures. The solution in the puzzle lies in so arranging the strips that they show Willard in the complete picture, the heavy-weight champion. Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid, with directions.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

RUBBER TACKS.



They come six in a box. A wonderful imitation of the real tack. Made of rubber. The box in which they come is the ordinary tack box. This is a great parlor entertainer and you can play a lot of tricks with the tacks. Place them in the palm of your hand, point upward. Then slap the other hand over the tacks and it will seem as if you are committing suicide. Or you can show the tacks and then put them in your mouth and chew them, making believe you have swallowed them. Your friends will think you are a magician. Then, again, you can exhibit the tacks and then quickly push one in your cheek or somebody else's cheek and they will shriek with fear. Absolutely harmless and a very practical and funny joke. Price, by mail, 10c. a box of six tacks; 3 for 25c., postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

BINGO.

It is a little metal box. It looks very innocent, but is supplied with an ingenious mechanism which shoots off a harmless cap when it is opened. You can have more fun than a circus with this new trick. Place the BINGO in or under any other article and it will go off when the article is opened or removed. It can be used as a funny joke by being placed in a purse, cigarette box, or between the leaves of a magazine; also, under any movable article, such as a book, tray, dish, etc. The BINGO can also be used as a burglar alarm, as a theft preventer by being placed in a drawer, money till, or under a door or window or under any article that would be moved or disturbed should a theft be attempted. Price, 15c. each by mail, postpaid. Frank Smith, 383 Lenox Ave., New York.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.



New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 3 for 25c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

GREAT BURGLAR PUZZLE.

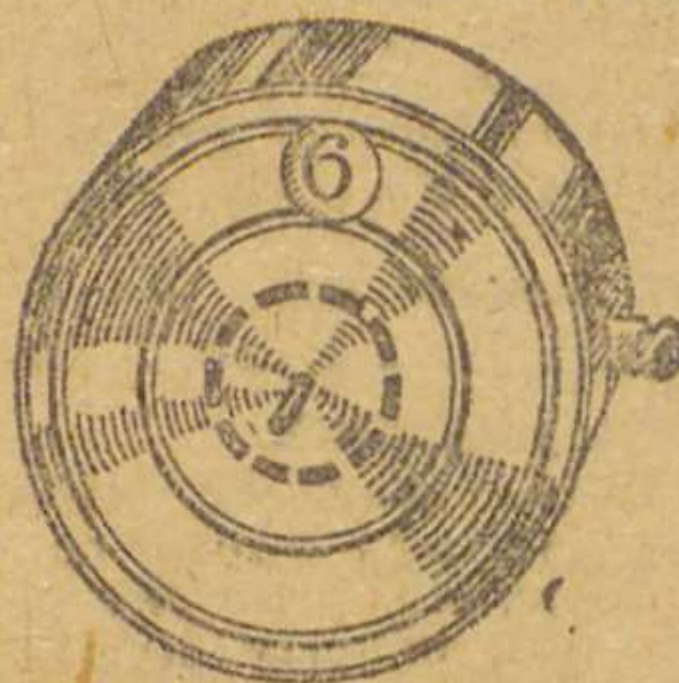


The latest and most fascinating puzzle ever placed on the market. Patented May 30. It consists of four revolving dials, each dial containing 16 figures, 64 figures in all. To open the safe these dials must be turned around until the figures in each of the 16 columns added together total 40. The puzzle is made on the plan of the combination lock on the large iron safes that open on a combination of figures. Persons have been known to sit up all night, so interested have they become trying to get each column to total 40 in this fascinating puzzle. With the printed key which we send with each puzzle the figures can be set in a few minutes so as to total 40 in each column.

Price 15 cents; mailed, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE AMUSEMENT WHEEL.



This handsome wheel, 7 1/4 inches in circumference, contains concealed numbers from 0 to 100. By spinning the wheel from the centerpost the numbers revolve rapidly, but only one appears at the circular opening when wheel stops spinning. It can be made to stop instantly by pressing the regulator at side. You can guess or bet on the number that will appear, the one getting the highest number winning. You might get 0, 5 or 100. Price, 15 cents; 3 for 40 cents, mailed, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

GOOD LUCK GUN FOB.

The real western article carried by the cowboys. It is made of fine leather with a highly nicked buckle. The holster contains a metal gun, of the same pattern as those used by all the most famous scouts. Any boy wearing one of these fobs will attract attention. It will give him an air of western romance. The prettiest and most serviceable watch fob ever made. Send for one to-day. Price 20 cents each by mail postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



THE TANTALIZER PUZZLE.



Consists of one horizontal and one perpendicular piece of highly polished metal bent in such a manner that when assembled it seems utterly impossible to get them apart, but by following the directions it is very easily accomplished. This one is a brain twister. Price 10c. by mail, postpaid, with directions.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

SNAPPER CIGAR.

The real thing for the cigar grafter. If you smoke you must have met him. He sees a few choice cigars in your pocket and makes no bones about asking you for one. You are all prepared for him this time. How? Take one of these cigars snappers (which is so much like a real cigar you are liable to smoke it yourself by mistake). Bend the spring back towards the lighted end, and as you offer the cigar let go the spring and the victim gets a sharp, stinging snap on the fingers. A sure cure for grafters. Price, by mail, ten cents each, postpaid, or three for 25c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE SMALLEST BIBLE ON EARTH!
Size of a postage stamp. Can you imagine it? Contains 200 pages; New Testament illustrated. The biggest wonder of the Twentieth Century. Boys coin money selling them. Sample 10c; per dozen, 75c. Ross H. Kelly, 342 Batavia St., Toledo, Ohio.

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JAPANESE MAGIC PAPER.



The latest, greatest and best little trick perfected by the ingenious Japanese is called Yaka Hula. It consists of two packages of specially prepared paper, one a sensitized medium, and the other a developing medium. The process of manufacture is a secret. By wetting a white sheet, and pressing a pink sheet on top of it, the white sheet will develop quaint photographic scenes, such as landscapes of Japan, portraits of Japanese characters, pictures of peculiar buildings, Gods, temples, etc. These pictures are replicas of actual photographs, and print up in a beautiful sepia brown color. Intensely interesting for both old and young. Price, 12c. per package, by mail postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE BALANCING BIRD.



It measures more than four inches from tip to tip of wings, and will balance perfectly on the tip of your finger nail, on the point of a lead pencil, or on any pointed instrument, only the tip of the bill resting on the nail or pencil point, the whole body of the bird being suspended in the air with nothing to rest on. It will not fall off unless shaken off. A great novelty. Wonderful, amusing and instructive.

Price 10 cents, mailed postpaid.

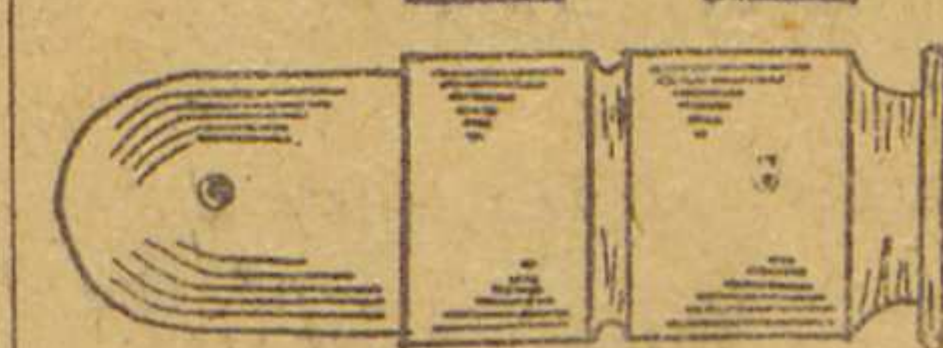
WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

ADAM'S TEASER PUZZLE.

This is a nut cracker. The way to do it is as follows: Turn the top of the two small loops toward you, taking hold of the two large loops with each hand. Hold firm the loop held with the left hand and pull the other toward the right, and at the same time impart a twisting motion away from you. You can get the rest of the directions with the puzzle. Price 12 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

DICE BULLET.



This Bullet and contents will afford you lots of "game." Not, however, the kind of game usually "got" with bullets. The illustration may suggest the idea. This little novelty consists of a real shell fitted with a hollow "bullet," and contains two small bone dice. This will make a very acceptable gift to any of your soldier friends. Each 15 cents, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

AUTOMOBILE PUZZLE.



This little steel puzzle is one of the most perplexing on the market, and yet when you master it a child could do it. It measures 1 1/4 by 4 inches. The trick is to spell out words as indicated on the cut. Price 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

TWO-CARD MONTE.

This famous trick gets them all. You pick up a card and when you look at it you find you haven't got the card you thought you had.

Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.
WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

MAGIC PENCILS.

The working of this trick is very easy most startling and mystifying. Give the case and three pencils to any one in your audience with instructions to place any pencil in the case point upward and to close case and put the remaining two pencils in his pocket. You now take the case with the pencil in it and can tell what color it is. Directions how to work the trick with each set.

Price 25 cts. each by mail, postpaid.
Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE HELLO PUZZLE



Can you get the ring off? This puzzle is the latest creation of Yankee ingenuity. Apparently it is the easiest thing in the world to remove the ring from the block, but it takes hours of study to discover the trick, unless you know how it is done. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c.; 3 for 25c.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

NUT AND BOLT PUZZLE.



A very ingenious puzzle, consisting of a nut and bolt with a ring fastened on the shank, which cannot be removed unless the nut is removed. The question is how to remove the nut. Price, 15c, by mail, postpaid.
FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

IMITATION OUT FINGER.



A cardboard finger, carefully bandaged with linen, and the side and end are blood-stained. When you slip it on your finger and show it to your friends, just give a groan or two, nurse it up, and pull a look of pain. You will get nothing but sympathy until you give them the laugh. Then duck! Price 10c. each, postpaid.
Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

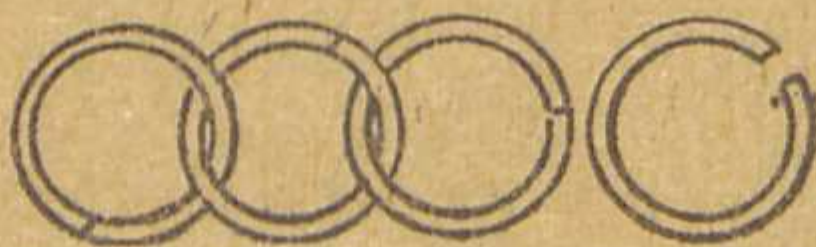
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Made in the exact shape of a submarine. With this comical little instrument you can give a bride and groom one of the finest serenades they ever received. Or, if you wish to use it as a ventriloquist, you will so completely change your voice that your best friend will not recognize it. Price, 12c, by mail, postpaid.

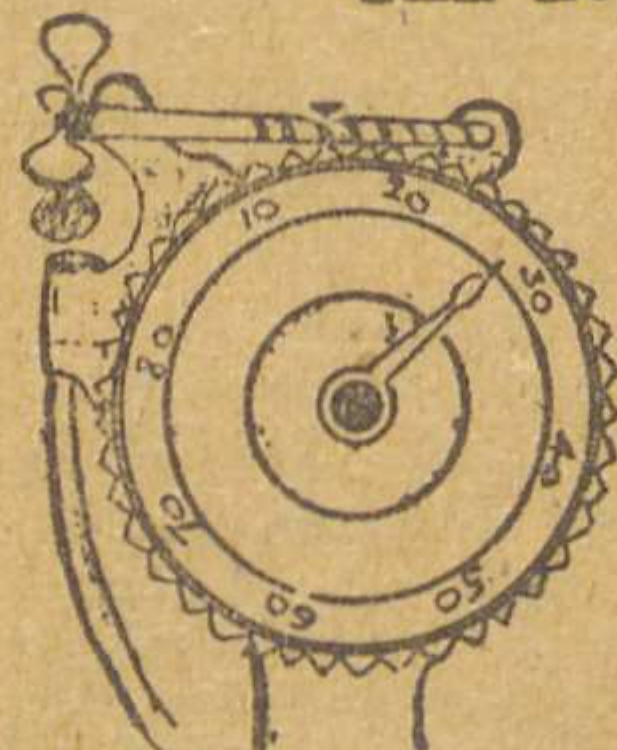
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A number of rings. The scheme is to link them together just exactly the same way magicians link their hoops. It looks dead easy. But we defy anybody to do it unless they know the secret. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.
WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

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FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

We have here one of the greatest little novelties ever produced, with this instrument you can absolutely test the strength of your lungs. It has an indicator which clearly shows you the number of pounds you can blow. Lots of fun testing your lungs. Get one and see what a good blower you are. Price 15c, by mail,

THE RUBBER DAGGER.



On account of the war we have substituted this novelty for the Magic Dagger. It is eight inches in length, made to look exactly like a steel weapon and would deceive almost anybody at whom you might thrust it. But as the blade is made of rubber, it can do no injury. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre Street, Brooklyn, New York.

THE WAR FOUNTAIN PEN.



A very handsome fountain pen case to which is attached a pocket holder neatly made of metal and highly nickel-plated. When your friend desires the use of your pen and gets it, he is very much astonished when he removes the cap by the sudden and loud noise of the explosion that occurs, and yet a little paper cap does it all. Price, 35c, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

JITNEY BUS GAME.



A circular metal box with a glass top. Inside is a tiny garage fixed at one side and a loose traveling little Ford. It requires an expert to get the swiftly moving auto into the garage. This one grabs your interest, holds it, and almost makes you wild when you find after repeated trials how hard it is to do the trick. Price 12c, by mail, postpaid.
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